WOMEN'S LIVES IN A SHIPBUILDING COMMUNITY:

IRISH CATHOLIC PORT GLASGOW IN THE 1930s

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I dedicate this thesis to my mother, whose strength of spirit

is testimony to the tradition and the community

of "Port" women to which she belongs.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work.

Hugh Patrick Hagan

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ABSTRACT

A conventional account of the shipbuilding town of Port Glasgow might concentrate on the male side of that community, on the shipyards, the workers and their culture. Instead, this thesis explores features of that community from the perspective of the lives of Port Glasgow's Irish Catholic female population.

While male experience is also included, the focus is upon female life in an urban industrial setting. In the main, the inter-war years and the period immediately following provide the time frame, although material from other periods is also included. Importantly, the thesis draws extensively on interviews conducted with women and men who experienced the period and the place at first hand. These recordings have been lodged in the archives of the School of Scottish Studies.

After outlining the methodology and providing the historical context of this industrial centre, including an account of its development and built environment, the chapters focus on the home and the household and what helped to create and sustain these - courtship and marriage and the place of entertainment and leisure pursuits and courtship; the impact of housing provision on married relationships; the networks in place to assist young couples in finding a home; the circumstances of home-making; family life; the role of religion and cultural beliefs and traditions within the home, and the interaction between these and the wider religious community and institutions.

This thesis brings to light experience which has hitherto received relatively little attention and shows the value of a critical use of oral testimony for exploring and understanding lives which have contributed to Scotland's industrial history.

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Introduction and Methodology

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1 INTRODUCTION

> People construct community symbolically, making it a resource and repository of meaning and a reference to their identity. (Cohen 1985:118)

Can any of us really define our identity? We all experience times in our adult life when we appear to be controlling its course and we feel confident about what our individual identity is. But in moments of uncertainty, when the foundations of our life have been rocked, we tend to examine our identity; there is an unconscious desire to reaffirm the ties with our past, and hence with our identity. For they are, I believe, one and the same.

We explore the constituents of our identity; why we believe the things we do, maintain the social and personal links we do, adhere to any sense of place we might harbour and hold views which might, in relation to our changing socio-economic circumstances, seem at odds with the views of those around us at any given time. We guard our individuality, the right to steer our lives in the direction we consider best, but just how much of an individual decision is behind that determination? An enforced change of circumstances causing us to change the course of our life can compel us to consider not only *our* past but the collective past of the place and people witnessing that change with us.

Personal History Revisited

Such an enforced change of circumstances caused me to ponder my individual identity as well as my identity within the collective past of Port Glasgow's shipbuilding

community. After ten years working as a carpenter in the shipyards of Port Glasgow and Greenock, I was made redundant in 1984. In that year, Trafalgar House bought over the oil construction concern of Scott Lithgow Ltd., Port Glasgow, which was the largest, strongest and most enduring yard on the lower reaches of the Clyde, and embarked on a rationalisation programme which saw thousands of workers made redundant and parts of the shipyard real estate sold off for redevelopment (cf. Appendix Figure 1). The shipyards had been declining and shedding labour for many years before this, but this development represented the death knell of the industry in Port Glasgow. For Portonians, this meant the end of any hope that shipbuilding and engineering might one day return to dominate the local economy.

Like many of my work mates, I walked from the yard's gatehouse past the mammoth gantry crane with no idea of what lay ahead. Such was the power and significance of the shipyards in the area that few Portonians, including the younger generation who had grown up with a declining industry, had even considered life without the shipyards on the shorefront. Most shipyard workers and their families clung to the hope that the economic downturn in shipbuilding would dissipate and the industry would once again provide stability and continuity of employment.

Port Glasgow had witnessed economic downturns in the past. By the late 1970s, the ratio of apprentice intake was significantly reducing, but in the minds of families with male school leavers, there was still a genuine prospect of shipyard employment. Like most of my classmates, I was destined make my living in the shipyards and thus to be integrated with family tradition.

As a stubbornly average performer at school, I showed no interest in history. I recall, however, walking through the gates of James Lamont and Co. Ltd., Shipbuilders and

Repairers, on my first day at work, and being overwhelmed by a sense of my own history, the history of my shipyard-working forebears, my father, grandfathers and great grandfathers. I was acutely aware of walking the route these men had walked before me. Moreover, in Lamont's, one's imagination was not only fired by the extant traditional working practices employed by one's shipyard working forebears, but by the very tools and machinery which in many cases dated back to their day, and which may well have been touched and operated by their hand.

The intensity of this feeling of being surrounded by a real sense of tangible history in the shipyards was matched only by a compelling sense of industrial trade unionism at home. My father dedicated his working life to the trade union movement in the shipyards and further afield, and the family home regularly resembled the smoke filled room of union meeting folklore, where members came to seek assistance and clear their contribution cards for impending employment.

Even so, before entering the shipyards, I had no real understanding of what trade unionism was about, and it would be years later before I fully understood the extent of my father's trade union convictions and the regard with which he was and is held by those he served. However, because of my father's influence my knowledge of shipyard trade unionism was more comprehensive than that of many of my school-leaving colleagues. Once in the shipyards, this influence was realised in the understanding I had for the respect of the power of the union officials among the men. There was a healthy measure of disrespect too, it must be said, but the overwhelming feeling was one of support and confidence in the elected representatives of the workers.

The history of the shop steward movement on the Clyde is legend, and the weight of this principled history against unfair employers in the industry was maintained even in

the 1970s. The Red Clydeside ethos still remained vibrant in local folklore and was revitalised by the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders' work-in in 1971 when workers, their families and supporters raised £250,000 to sustain their protest and forced the government of the day to rethink its industrial strategy (Harvie 1993:159). Shop stewards were as much local politicians and poor men's lawyers as they were trade representatives. Trade unionism formed an integral part of the male-dominated shipyard industry as well as of the local community.

The influence of my father's unionism and the overwhelming sense of history and tradition in Lamont's shipyard had a profound effect on me. Like most other shipyard workers, I came to hate the conditions of work, the poor pay, and the extremes of the working environment of the place. But I had acquired such a strong sense of the folklore and history of the place and its people that an invincible sense of pride in being part of this tradition and this shipyard community developed in me.

In order for us to measure or quantify that which we like or hold in esteem, we must have the opposite experience in our sight, i.e. that which is not to our satisfaction. The shipyards were awash with contradictions and opposites, not the least of which was inherent in the sectarian divide. Both inter- and intra-trade sectarianism regularly boiled over into physical violence.

There was nothing romantic in the circumstances of my position as an apprentice in a department of twenty time-served carpenters who, almost to a man, held different religious and sporting affiliations from me, a Catholic of Irish ancestry with an unshakable devotion to Glasgow Celtic football Club, and whose howf came under frequent violent attacks from my religious cohorts in the plating howfs no more than fifty yards away. Referred to regularly (and largely jokingly) as "the spy in the camp",

my early apprenticeship years were often fraught with uncertainty and fear for my physical wellbeing, not least because of one particular carpenter who took great pleasure in terrorising young apprentices. I consoled myself with the belief that he regularly struck terror into the hearts of all apprentices, but in retrospect I am confident that my share of terror was more generous, due to my religious persuasion and football supporting convictions. Thus, my belief in the tradition and folklore of the place as a great binding element in the greater community of Port Glasgow is tempered by the real existence of terrible divisions.

Each faction of this shipyard society identified primarily with their own cultural, religious and industrial brotherhood. Yet, there was a common recognition among all workers that the work situation needed to prevail for them to make a living, and so co-operation between the trades and across the sectarian divide was ultimately secured. The most obvious and powerful cross-cultural link was the trade union movement. As my journeyman had a great fondness for saying in relation to shop stewards, they were experts at "riding two horses with the one arse". This meant that whilst being accepted members of their cultural and religious camp within the shipyard, they were at the same time commanding the respect of the workers in their role of shop steward or shop stewards' convenor. In my time as an apprentice carpenter in Lamont's the shop stewards' convenor was also a prominent member of the Orange Order. The make-up of the shop stewards' electoral college brought about his elevation to this post and guaranteed his reign, but he was recognised generally as being, first and foremost, a trade unionist in the yard environment and was never, in my memory, slandered as a management lackey. Of course, many among the Catholic workforce saw this situation as incongruous and anxious voices were raised from time to time. However, among

those who remember him, from across the sectarian divide, Johnny Mitchell is remembered as a fair convenor and a trade unionist first and foremost.

If one event stands out as being singularly most influential in convincing me of the tradition and folklore of the shipyard community, it was being initiated as a member of the local union branch and undergoing the ritual one had to follow to be allowed to join the fellowship of the United Society of Boilermakers and Shipbuilders and Structural Workers (cf. Appendix Figure 2).

I was only permitted entry to the meeting after I had knocked the door of the meeting room three times and asked the "worthy members" to allow "a stranger" to enter so that I could pledge myself to the cause of the Boilermakers Society. The door was firmly closed in my face whilst the membership considered my request, and in the time-honoured fashion I was eventually allowed to take my place before the union officials at the top table in order to be sworn in. Having answered the traditional questions verifying the authenticity of my apprenticeship and producing my journeyman's lines from my employer, I was applauded by the men present and asked to take my place among the worthy brothers. Of course, immediately after the meeting I was taken to the local pub and allowed to buy my union officers a celebratory drink.

It was this male community and my past experience as a member of its ranks that I sought to exploit when I embarked on my research into the history of Port Glasgow between the wars. Much has been written on the industrial heritage of Scotland. Works which set out to describe both the industries and the communities or towns dependent on them tend to portray - as my introduction has done until now - the lives of the dominant male population, especially if the industry is the main focus of the study, for

most of these industries were and are dominated by male employees[1]. The wider issues of housing and social organisation also appear in many cases to have a male bent in the historical record.

The Hidden History of Port Women

Discussing my initial research proposals with my immediate family, I became aware that my mother had as much, if not more, information to offer by way of an insight into the wider experience of inter-war Port Glasgow than either my father or my grandfather. In fact, there was a reticence among the men to tackle issues which dealt with the domestic scene, but which were not removed from the male experience, such as money, food, children, socialising and other seemingly cross-gender issues, when my mother was present. Matters which impinged upon the home were very definitely considered an area of female domination. It soon became clear to me that the women of Port Glasgow had an interesting story to tell (cf. Appendix Figure 3).

But where does one go to find out about the female experience in the industrial community? The female political, economic and social experience in Scotland, especially in the twentieth century, is being more thoroughly addressed as we enter the twenty-first century. However, documentary evidence of the aspects I wished to explore, such as personal experience of entertainment and leisure, marriage and religious custom and belief, and the acquiring and creation of a family home, are hard to come by in printed format and virtually impossible to find for Port Glasgow's inter-war female population. It was apparent that the task of exploring these themes with this

[1] The obvious historical contrast to this is Dundee's jute industry, which depended on female labour, and other industries like fishing, where the fisher lassies following the herring fleets on their seasonal round of British ports, landing herring for the women to gut, dress and pack.

particular socio-economic group had to be undertaken by gathering oral testimony from a selection of individuals with experience of the period and the relevant issues.

Samuel (1973:110) remarks that "the reason why history has so often a bureaucratic bias is not I think because of the particular bias of individual historians, but very largely because bureaucratic documents are the ones most often preserved". If we accept that bureaucratic records also have an inherent male bias in their creation, especially true of those created in the industrial setting, then we can understand why the female historical voice has been weak. We are still overly dependent for historical evidence of working-class lives on records created by the state or local bureaucrats, or on the middle and upper classes who created records, diaries, autobiographies and the like. So much of what we know of the working-class domestic environment has come to us from the official sources compiled by middle-class professionals. Whilst these are essential primary sources for understanding the nature of working-class dwellings and the working or living environment, they rarely tell us how people coped with the conditions described.

We have already lost the voices of the Irish immigrants to Port Glasgow and other Scottish industrial centres three generations and less ago. However, by recording and analysing the reminiscences of their descendants we can gather invaluable evidence of the historical footprints the early settlers made. Present-day Irish Catholics in Port Glasgow are not, of course, necessarily aware of living conditions 100 years ago, nor might they be interested, but they are, however unwittingly, the carriers of the traditions and cultural markers of their forebears. By studying the customs and beliefs of today's Catholic community in Port Glasgow, we experience something of their ancestors' beliefs. We need only consider the continuing adherence to wake rituals and the

importance of the supernatural world in their belief system to encounter a direct consequence of their Irish ancestry.

"The bias [oral history] introduces into history is wholly welcome because it will necessarily direct the historian's attention to the fundamental common things in life; the elements of individual and social experience rather than upon administrative and political chronologies." (Samuel 1973:119-120) It was precisely this fundamental historical level I wished to reach with my research in Port Glasgow between the wars. By employing oral history methods to focus on the "fundamental common things in life" for Port Glasgow's female population we introduce a bias in favour of their historical record which up till now has been overshadowed by the industrial male heritage. Oral history can bring to life forgotten history, but it can also serve to show us how, at the fundamental level of life, history is remembered.

History Remembered: The Importance of Oral Testimony

> "Whether there are pure memories, distorted memories or only present consciousness, the fact remains that people believe they have memories, that they are a source of information and that that information requires serious evaluation." (Lummis 1987:13)

If we fail to recognise the importance and usefulness of oral history, then our historical record may fail to dedicate enough attention to the individual social experience which Samuel claims is a necessary bias if historiography is to progress our understanding of working-class history.

Apart from ethnic cultural traits we can also explore through the medium of oral testimony the theory that we develop into the person we become as a result of the social systems we are exposed to. As individuals operating within social systems cultivated

over generations, we are conditioned to adopt the system and therefore become recognisably an intrinsic part of that community. By failing to make serious analytical use of oral testimony, we surrender the chance to gain an insight into past beliefs and cultures through present-day remnants. We also lose the opportunity to view the depths of strength and the notion that our individuality is created within set, preconceived social norms. Through the medium of oral history we can access history at the level of the individual to examine how much of individuals we really are. Oral history is not, in my opinion, simply an historical tool with which to right a perceived imbalance in traditional historical records. It can certainly provide historians with a new and complementary medium for recording history. But, more importantly, it provides us with a way of recording how history is remembered and perceived by the working-class, which can be as important for the historical record as historical events themselves.

Oral Testimony: Exploring the Accepted Order

In times of great conflict, events can be interpreted by opposing sides so differently as to convince neutrals that different events are being debated. In Northern Ireland events of historical and cultural importance and crucial to the historical philosophy of both sides of the sectarian divide take on different interpretations accordingly. The Battle of the Boyne in 1690 is remembered among those in the Loyalist camp today as a great triumph of the Protestant cause over the forces of Catholicism. The same battle is remembered, by Irish Republicans and Catholics, as a battle in which the forces mustered in their favour were dealt a decisive blow by the Papacy who supported William of Orange, a fact which, being anathema to today's Loyalist version of the

battle, is not readily recalled in Protestant recounting of the event. Time has preserved two versions of the one event, each side endeavouring to have its account endorsed as the important one. Of course, both are correct but, depending where you stand in relation to the divide, one side will be more correct than the other.

Oral testimony gathered from both sides of this argument will not lead to agreement on the historical accuracy or otherwise of the two relative stances, but it does provide us with information on how the event is remembered and recalled and handed down as fact in each community. More importantly, it provides us with an insight into how modern day events of historical importance to "The Cause" are likely to be interpreted by opposing camps. Here we would have evidence in the form of oral testimony of the impact of social construction upon the lives of members in these communities and how history would be likely to be preserved.

In this thesis, the recollection of history will be the main theme. We will not consider specific historical events and how they are remembered; rather, the memories and experiences of those interviewed will serve to illuminate their lifestyle and the social nexus that sustained them through the difficult times they lived in. Nevertheless, in relation to the theme advanced above regarding particular interpretations of specific events in history to reflect the social construction of the community, we shall see how oral history lends itself to the task of challenging established views on the role of women in the industrial setting.

The historical dominance of men in the industrial domestic context has long been established and is best illustrated by the "breadwinner" scenario. This portrays the family at home, anxiously dependent on the husband/father finding employment and returning home with his wages to sustain the family. There is a strict economic

relationship here, which emphasises the better opportunities available to men, especially in the industrial towns, of gaining employment, and that male employment is better paid than female employment. There is also the fact that caring for the children and the domestic scene whilst holding down a job is more difficult and complicates the female role to the extent that female employment, traditionally, is secondary to that of the male. Accordingly, we have traditional ideas about who should do paid work and who should do domestic work. Port Glasgow between the wars was definitely a "breadwinner" society.

With the aid of oral testimony, I shall explore this relationship accepted as a norm in the early years of the twentieth century. We shall hear of the breadwinner privileges known to exist: the best and greatest quantity of food, money for personal pleasures such as public houses and gambling and freedom from the domestic necessities relating to household management and childcare. However, oral history allows us to challenge the notion of women as subservient dependants totally reliant on men for financial reward and social credit. It reveals women as workers, household managers and bosses of the domestic scene, financial experts, independent thinkers, schemers and planners who were individually resilient and collectively strong and maintained the family whilst tholing traditional male privileges. They maintained this role during periods of male income, but more importantly in the 1930s, during the regular and often long periods of male unemployment.

Camaraderie is a fundamental prerequisite to survival and that was especially so for Port women in the period under examination. Devoid of material assets, the fellowship of their equals was fundamental to their well-being as individuals and as a family. The currency for maintaining this exchange of fellowship was, and still is, respectability and

dependability. For this system to function in one's favour the past is a crucial factor and a shared knowledge of the past of one's peers, community identity in a very real sense, is a basic tenet.

It is commonly acknowledged that the past shapes the future. In all aspects of life we turn regularly to the past for guidance. We gather our views and understandings from the past and shape them to accommodate the demands of the present and use them to frame the future. We all have access to the past, but in different ways.

There is a tradition among the middle and upper classes of leaving behind a documented history through writings such as diaries, autobiographies and fiscal records. The working class have no such tradition. Even in the more record-conscious twentieth century, they did not commit experiences and common knowledge to paper. The working-class house their past, their history, in their collective memory. It is therefore crucial that we explore this working class collective memory to gain an insight into their past experience. We must not fail to recognise this collective repository of working class history for, in many instances, it is the only surviving record. As an ethnological study this thesis has its basis in the experience of the individuals it relies on for oral testimony and recollections of the time and place being visited. It cannot represent the community experience, but it does go some way towards revealing the daily life experiences of families in Port Glasgow's working class dwellings in the inter-war period and beyond.

These individual experiences, especially in relation to living conditions, are put into the wider regional and national context as far as possible through the use of primary source material, e.g. census returns and the returns of the Medical Officers of Health in the Department of Health for Scotland reports. Unfortunately, infant and maternal

mortality rates for Port Glasgow in the 1930s are not available. In the absence of these statistics, oral testimony allows us to know something of the personal experience, and in particular that of working class women, of the loss of a sibling or a mother.

Organisation of Chapters

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. The layout of the chapters represents the continuity of the themes pursued within them. However, it will be obvious that each chapter is capable of standing alone as an individual snapshot of life in inter-war Port Glasgow.

Chapter One seeks to lay the foundations for the others. It provides an historical overview of the development of the town, which will allow the reader to consider the themes and the people featuring throughout the present work in a geographical context. None of us operate routinely in complete detachment from our physical surroundings. Just as it is accepted for this thesis that pre-existing features of the social environment affect our individual environment, so it is also recognised that our physical and geographical surroundings will shape our thinking.

The following six chapters consider the themes which are central to the purpose of the present thesis and seek to explore the world of the female working class in this industrial west of Scotland town. **Chapter Two** focuses on the theme of courtship into marriage, and examines the considerations that were prominent in the thinking behind the act of marriage and married life in general. We also hear how the camaraderie or fellowship of females, wives and mothers, was important to the survival of new marriages and at the same time how the system of life after marriage served to confirm society's structures in regard to male/female, husband/wife relationships. The

expectations and socially constructed life styles of the community are viewed through these issues.

Chapter Three considers the networks that were central to the female survival system within the community. Having married and fulfilled an important rite of passage, women were now responsible for the home, which meant the provision of a home as well as the management thereof. Using oral testimony, we explore the strategies that were critical to household and family management and show how these were fundamental to the quest of two Port women to obtain a place to live after marriage. The pre-existing features of the social environment are exposed here and indicate the extent to which women were dependent upon family/social networks in gaining a home and, more significantly, the extent to which men were dependent upon female social organisation for the attainment of a home.

Chapter Four considers how women in particular remember what it was that constituted entertainment for them, and how closely related these pursuits were to courting and the formation of long-term relationships.

Chapters Five and Six investigate the role of religion and the cultural traditions of town centre Portonians. They specifically question how much of a cultural bond existed among the female and male Roman Catholics of the inter-war community to their Irish antecedents. We consider their reminiscences about the issues of church discipline and organisation and the existence of the supernatural.

Chapter Seven focuses on the sectarian splits in the town as this time and draws on the experience of the informants to explore some aspects of the sectarian divide. Only the Catholic perspective is being viewed, as this is the religious persuasion of the majority of the informants. However, in relation to inter-religious marriage we are

afforded an insight into the Protestant perspective. Jim Renfrew relates his experience of relinquishing his Protestant upbringing in favour of Catholicism to marry his fiancée and the consequences that decision had on him and his family. Apart from inter-religious marriage we consider sectarian associations, religious intolerance and the female involvement. We also hear about the role of the priest in managing sectarianism and ensuring his flock remained true to the teachings of the church.

Oral History and the Question of Identity

It is my contention that through the use of oral testimony we can shed more detailed historical light on the recent past. Absolute truths will not emerge from the reminiscence of past generations, but this is not to say that we cannot rely on oral testimony. It has often been argued that the same critical questions that are asked of oral history be set to the documentary sources also. Thus, for example, government reports into accidents in mines or statements made in the immediate aftermath of a crime are considered to be more worthy historical documents because of their proximity to the event. Yet, these are documents created from oral testimony and eye witness accounts. Who, then, is to say that the accounts of those interviewed for the purpose of these official documents are more reliable when collected close to the event than they might be in the years after the event? Lummis makes the valid point that "much documentary evidence is oral evidence which has been committed to paper at a particular point in time" (Lummis 1987:12). The point at which the document is compiled is not so important as the validity of the evidence itself. It is not inconceivable that those closest to an accident or crime may be willing to offer evidence about these events some years later, which at the time they would have been concerned about volunteering.

People have memories and these deserve to be treated like any other source of information, and analysed accordingly. What better way is there of analysing notions of identity than by listening to the accounts of those whose past experiences we seek to know more about? This thesis is an oral history of a number of people who have recollections or anecdotal evidence of a period in Port Glasgow's history and of a section of the larger community which is rapidly becoming out of the reach of living memory. It is an ethnological study first and foremost, which uses oral history as a source and technique, and not a sociological study of the period and place. It does not, therefore, attempt to draw conclusions or make assumptions about the universal experience of the town's inhabitants; it is emphatically delivering to the historical record the experience, reminiscence and accounts of those respondents who have contributed to it on a range of issues. In as much as the respondents form part of an identifiable or homogeneous group, it could be said that their accounts are reflective of a wider experience.

Memory may not be a failsafe historical tool, but it can be shown to be as reliable as documentary sources and it has the added usefulness of allowing us to explore how participants in history view their past and define their identity.

2 METHODOLOGY

Informant Selection Procedure

I implicitly began the selection of informants when discussing my proposals with my immediate family. At this point I made the decision to include and prioritise the female experience whilst not entirely excluding the male experience.

The number and make-up of the people I would want to interview was my first concern. This led me to view the topics, the geographical extent and the time scale to be covered in relation to my informants. This approach has proved to be most compatible with the broad thrust of my research intentions.

I made a conscious decision at this stage that there should not be a large number of informants. There were two fundamental reasons for this. In the first instance, the thrust of this study is not to identify the experience of the whole community of Port Glasgow, but rather the experience of those living in the inter-war town centre. Through the reminiscences of these informants I would be able to add to the body of historical knowledge already in existence. Secondly, I understood that I would be required to revisit topics as I learned more and developed additional questions for my informants. Therefore, rather than adopting a social scientific methodology based on quantitative evidence gained through questionnaires and formally structured interviews with a large number of informants, I chose an ethnological methodology for my research which allowed me to interview a smaller number of people with whom I could spend a greater amount of time developing their personal recollections and experiences.

My background in the town has helped in the process of finding suitable informants for the study, but such a method of selection has its drawbacks. In fact, being known by

your informant, or, more importantly, your family being known by the informant and vice versa, can actually have a negative effect on the interview. If the informant feels that the information given may be relayed back to the interviewer's family, and possibly become common knowledge, the researcher can find it difficult to elicit any information. Informants may harbour opinions and reminiscences of particular events they know to be unpopular or contrary to the established version. There may, therefore, be a natural reluctance to be the one outspoken voice. Similarly, discussing private and personal issues such as sex, pregnancy, contraception and childbirth can prove difficult with a family acquaintance with whom you may have a family connection going back some years to when the interviewer was a child.

Nevertheless, the thesis does include oral testimony from female respondents who chose to divulge some details of their personal sexual and childbearing experiences. It was only possible for them to speak to me about these experiences because their experience was that they could trust me to deal with the information sympathetically and because they had come to see the worth of the study they were participating in. The fact that they overcame their embarrassment of talking about these issues and that they discussed them with someone regarded as a family friend or acquaintance is proof enough that a smaller respondent group can produce results in these potentially difficult areas of research when kinship and neighbourhood ties seem to militate against success. More importantly, the fact that we were able to discuss these issues as man and women was, I believe, completely down to the relationship of trust that had developed. Even the more advantageous position that can sometimes be gained in the interview situation when there is no familial or neighbourly relationship between interviewer and

respondent can falter if the combination of gender and generational differences are present.

Whilst recognising the limited success gained in these areas of deeply personal and private reminiscence, I have to admit that the private and intimate issues surrounding sex, contraception, pregnancy and childbirth proved to be an area of research which was difficult for me to develop fully. When one of my informants in particular was about to tell me something of a personal nature, she lent forward, looked around to check that the coast was clear, and prefaced the information by saying: "Now don't tell your mother I told you this, but ..." This was not because she knew my mother specifically; rather she was showing her understanding that an unwritten rule from her upbringing which says these "things" should not discussed with a man, was about to be broken. It may not be the first time it was broken, but the importance of the moral code was such that each time the rule is breached it appears as though for the first time. I came to understand that this whispered introduction was an indication that she was about to tell me something that she considered secret or only 'women's business'. Unfortunately, I also came to understand that in her case it meant that there would be no further revelations of this kind in this particular interview. In this sense, this ethnological study also provides an interesting insight into the dynamics of such a forum for gathering oral testimony.

Representativeness

I chose the inter-war period over a more recent period basically because I knew there were Portonians still alive - family members, extended family and friends - who were of this period and whom I could interview. Given the relationship I wanted to adopt

towards my informants, i.e. establishing rapport and trust based on common knowledge and community links, random sampling was not going to be conducive to my methodology. Rather than choosing informants objectively, I wanted to be directed towards (new) informants by other informants. I sought to maintain a link both between me and the individual informant and between all the informants. My other method of informant selection depended on the family network. In this way, the group of informants was established as belonging to a working class, largely Roman Catholic network.

The selection of candidates by these two methods also established the chronological period and the geographical representation covered in the present study. In the inter-war period, the town was contained to one central area. The expansion of the town towards Greenock to the west and Glasgow to the south east had yet to begin. However, a religious stratification, which saw Catholic and Protestant residents of the town living in defined quarters, was in place. These quarters, although not exclusive, were recognised by Portonians as areas of either one persuasion or the other. So, by relying on the extended family network for informants, I had the social class, religious colour, time scale and geographical area defined for me.

Interview Techniques

> Each of us according to the light he has is helping to bring back *man* into history - not man mediated through trends, movements, distribution maps and statistics, but man himself, men and women in the flesh. And it is this direct contact which ... works through a kind of osmosis, through your skin so to speak, to give the feel of history, a sense of the past. (Evans 1973:71)

The aim of the present study is to bring the experience of a number of ordinary Portonians to the forefront of the historical frame. To this end, I established a loose

routine of visiting my interviewees every time I was in Port Glasgow. I did not always carry a recording device with me, especially in the initial meetings, since nothing can be more off-putting to some informants than being confronted with a recording machine. Even when interviewing family members, I always met them informally first without requiring them to submit themselves to a recording session. A series of this type of meetings before a formal recorded interview always succeeded in putting the person(s) to be interviewed at ease. They felt relaxed about an impending interview and about the topics they had discussed with me beforehand. Anxieties about being asked difficult questions, i.e. questions aimed at eliciting information they might consider intimate or almost secret, were mitigated in and by initial informal meetings and talks about these questions.

Such a procedure might be viewed as time-wasting. Moreover, it might be construed as a way of failing to capture important information as it is being recalled. It might be argued that when informants have said something in an informal situation, they will be reluctant to say it again. There is no doubt that some people's attitude to being interviewed can change when a recording device is placed in front of them and the belief is that those things said in the friendly, device-free chat may never be repeated in the formal interview. If the reminiscence is not captured the first time, then the opportunity to record it may never present itself again. However, I was confident that, in the course of my interviews, I would revisit themes and events so that reminiscences and memories would be recalled more than once. Of course, one may waste tape covering old ground, but this is, I believe, a small price to pay for achieving the relaxed state of the informant. If one pursues recording from the first meeting and the informant

is intimidated by the nature of the proceedings and the recording equipment, then the interview may not capture any useful information.

We must also remember that the same stories may not always be recounted identically by the same informant. Stories or events are carved in the memory of individuals by a series of crucial core elements which, when called to the forefront of the mind, are bolted together for presentation.

Just as posing the same question to different interviewees can serve to authenticate or provide alternative perspectives on another's recollection, so posing the same question on more than one occasion in different contexts to the same interviewee can yield good evidence of the authenticity of an event or period. It can also lead to a theme being developed by the respondent in a more informative way than if it was covered once and then left alone.

I also allowed many of my interviews to develop without constant interruption and priming from me. I did not organise interviews around a series of prepared questions; rather, I sought to develop themes. Certainly, a list of priority or top-level questions can allow the interviewer to elicit precise answers, and if he creates a series of sub-questions on the same topic he may be able to develop and build upon that theme. But in many cases the question list type of approach is restrictive and not always as organised and productive as it might at first seem.

I did experiment with the question list approach but even with a family member as interviewee and the depth of relationship that entailed, I discovered that the list tends not to take the interviewee into consideration. One compiles the questions and orders them according to one's own preference, yet one never really knows where an interview discussion is going to take the participants, especially when the interview requires the

informant to dig deep into their past experience. If the object is to relax the interviewee, and this must be a priority, then I found that a prepared list of questions militated against this. It can cause the informant to restrict the answer to question number one in anticipation of question number two. Throughout the interview, neither the interviewee nor interviewer becomes relaxed. Also, depending on how the interviewee answers the top level question, and one can never know that, no matter how close an affinity the interviewer has to the person being interviewed, one may find one's sub questions are redundant or rendered unanswerable.

Body language is a critical part of the interview technique and if the interviewer appears uncomfortable, or not focused on what the informant is saying, then he may lose their confidence. I found that working from a question list could be dangerously close to this situation because it compelled me to frequently look at my notes for guidance as to where I wanted to take the interview through the next question. Rather than risk the very real possibility of alienating my informants, I abandoned this system and opted to pursue interviews on a more conversational, thematic basis. Knowing the historical subject matter and the themes I wanted to explore, and knowing the interviewees, I was able to hold conversations in order to elicit the information I required. In this way the interviewees responded more freely as they felt in control of the interview and that I was listening to and absorbing their reminiscences with sincerity. On the other hand, I sought overall to gather responses to questions on certain key themes and issues.

Nevertheless, one is always aware that there is a fine line being trod between useful conversational interview, even if it occasionally strays from the desired path, and completely unrelated rambling. The greatest potential for unconstructive interviewing

arises in the group interview situation. One has a more legitimate right to interject in this type of interview in order to keep it on track. When three or more people are brought together for the purpose of an interview, the situation is more obviously contrived. Those involved may not have sat down together socially for some time, if ever. They expect more of a formal interview and to be more directed by the interviewer. The common problem encountered in this situation is noise and overlapping of voices. Quite frequently, two or more informants will strive to be first to make their point, or to be heard above others. Control over this situation is more difficult than in a one-to-one interview. However, it can be regulated to the satisfaction of those present and to the qualitative requirements of the recording through the interviewer's sign language, gestures, facial expressions and eye contact, and through his instructions. Experience is obviously a crucial factor here.

The benefit of this type of interview is the information one can gather through group dynamics. Informants will assist each other in the reminiscence process, remember parts of an event the others do not remember, recall names and places which bring inanimate memories back to life in the minds of their colleagues. Debate is the best form of food for the mind and it can be much more beneficial for informants to recall their life experiences collectively rather than being prompted by someone who has read around their period and their possible experiences. Again, although this is a controlled environment, it does not necessarily follow that it is always under control. If there is a group of relaxed, confident and opinionated individuals, then it is inevitable that in the case of a lengthy interview, at some point their views will diverge. Now, one may not simply be dealing with noise or the control of conversational manners. One might be dealing with spotting and stemming a potential argument. On one occasion during such

an interview with three ex-shipyard workers, I was forced to umpire such a hotly contested point over whether the greatest hardships were suffered by hand or machine riveters in the 1930s. Luckily, the interview was taking place in the informants' local pub, and I quelled the situation by offering to buy another round of drinks. The offer of another drink was a serious tactic to control a potentially heated situation, but perhaps the decisive moment in the seconds before I made the offer was when I stopped the recorder. There was a pause in the discussion at that moment when I reached across the table and pressed the pause button. It was a signal to all that this part of the debate was not worthy of recording. We must remember that, when interviewing members of an older generation, there is a mutual respect in operation. Respect is not only being shown by the interviewer towards his interviewees, but vice versa. You may be the first, indeed the only, person to devote time to listen to their life stories in years, and they have respect for you because of this. Often, older interviewees will tell you how pleasing it is to have someone younger interested in what they did with their lives, to listen to and understand their experiences. So, one must not forget that the recording device is also an integral part of the interviewer's toolbox of signs, body language and developing expertise in the handling of interview situations.

Recording Equipment

The interviews conducted for this thesis were recorded on two types of machinery and tapes. Many of the earlier recordings were captured on a Uher open-reel machine at 7.5 ips, the standard speed for all School of Scottish Studies archive recordings. The other machine employed was an Olympus Pearlcorder S 904, microcassette recorder, using Olympus XB 60 tapes. All the tapes are deposited with the School of Scottish Studies

and all extracts used from these recordings in the thesis are cited using the standard School of Scottish Studies reference format as follows: SA (Sound Archive) / Year / Tape number.

Non-SA Oral Recordings

No other archive oral history recordings were employed to complement the information given by those recorded specifically for the present thesis. However, there is some reference to recordings and transcripts from the same informants, which were made not for the purpose of this thesis, but for a television documentary on women's lives in the industrial community of Port Glasgow. As part of the agreement for conducting the interviews for the Time Quines programme (1993), I was given full transcripts of the interviews. The video tape and sound recordings are the property of Caledonia, Sterne and Wyld, an independent television production company based in Glasgow, and remain in their keeping. Use of this material can only be by copyright agreement of Caledonia, Sterne and Wyld Ltd. Citations of oral testimony in other oral history publications and books are referenced throughout the thesis in the Harvard convention, as are quotes from other papers and secondary sources.

Biographical Notes on Informants[2]

John Brown Sir Gabriel Wood Court Mariner's Home Greenock	b. 1914 m. 1942 Family. 1 Job. seaman

[2] Cf. Appendix pp. 362-365 for photographs of informants with the exception of Sarah Hagan, Letti Lyons and Jim Renfrew.

Paddy Collins 25 Kinross Ave Port Glasgow	b. 1912 m. 1934 Family. 4 (one died in infancy) Job. carpenter Religion. RC
John Connaghan 29 Castlehill Terrace Port Glasgow	b.1913 m. 1933 d. 1994 Family 1 Job. rivet heater/ putter-in/ plater's helper/ labourer Religion. RC
Emi Donnelly 16a King Street (Fenian Alley) Port Glasgow	b. 1923 m. 1947 Family. 2 Job. millworker/ commercial sector Religion. RC
Cassie Graham (Birkemyre Sheltered Housing Byrkemyre Road Port Glasgow)	b. 1912 m. 1931 d. 2000 Family. 6 (2 died in infancy) Jobs. spinner/ labourer/ cleaner/ housewife Religion. RC
Cathie Hagan 25 Kinross Ave Port Glasgow	b. 1937 m. 1955 Family. 4 Job. factory worker/ mill worker/ cinema usherette/ housewife Religion. RC
Hugo Hagan 25 Kinross Ave Port Glasgow	b. 1933 m. 1955 Family. 4 Job. welder Religion. RC
Sarah Hagan 22 Fore Street (Fenian Alley) Port Glasgow	b. 1913 m. 1930 Family. 3 Job. housweife Religion. RC **(No picture available)**

Mary Hudson 27 Kinross Ave Port Glasgow	b. 1912 m. 1934 d. 1993 Family. 6 (2 died in childhood) Job. housewife Religion. Protestant
Cassie Kane 29 Ardmore Rd Port Glasgow	b. 1917 m.1933 d. 2001 Family. 2 Jobs. spinner/ crane driver/ welder/ house-wife Religion. RC
Letti Lyons 2 Lemon Street Greenock	b. 1919 m. 1935 Family. 4 Job. commercial sector/ domestic service Religion. Protestant (married a RC and raised children as RCs) **(No picture available)**
Agnes Mulholland 29 Kinross Avenue Port Glasgow	b. 1920 m. 1946 Family. 3 Job. spinner Religion. RC
Harry Mulholland 29 Kinross Avenue Port Glasgow	b. 1920 m. 1946 Family. 3 Job. joiner Religion. RC
Jim McBride Sir Gabriel Wood Court Mariner's Home Greenock	b. 1924 m. 1949 Job. seaman Religion. RC
Jim McCormack Sir Gabriel Wood Court Mariner's Home Greenock	b. 1925 m. 1950 Family. 2 Job. seaman Religion. RC

Elizabeth McKenna Auchenbothie Sheltered Housing Port Glasgow	b. 1905 m. 1928 d. 1998 Family. 6 (2 died in infancy) Job. weaver/ mill clerk Religion. RC
Nan McLean 21 Oransay Avenue Port Glasgow	b. 1924 m. 1945 Family. 3 Job. spinner Religion. Protestant
Margaret O'Donoghue (33 Angus Rd Port Glasgow)	b. 1913 m. 1935 d. 1996 Family. 1 (and one miscarriage) Job. weaver Religion. RC
Bessie O'Neill 16a King Street (Fenian Alley) Port Glasgow	b. 1924 m. 1945 Family. 1 Job. millworker Religion. RC
Jim Pettigrew 30 Thistle Court Port Glasgow	b. 1912 m. 1920 Family. 5 Job. joiner Religion. Protestant
Jim Renfrew 24 Minard Road Port Glasgow	b. 1916 m. 1935 Family. 6 Job. driver Religion. RC (convert) **(No picture available)**
Davie Rorrison 9 Angus Rd Port Glasgow	b. 1946 m. 1967 Family. 4 Job. labourer Religion. RC

Jessie Rorrison 90 Park Farm Road Port Glasgow	b. 1926 m. 1946 Family. 3 Job. spinner Religion. RC
John Waddell 39 Thistle Court Port Glasgow	b. 1910 m. 1930 Family. 6 Job. plater Religion. Protestant
Josie Watson 32 Iona Rd Port Glasgow	b. 1927 m. 1950 Family. 6 Job. shop assistant/ housewife Religion. RC
Ella Wilson 19 Kinross Ave Port Glasgow	b. 1926 m. 1947 Family 3 Job. home help/ barmaid/ housewife Religion. RC

Transcription

> "The ear will mostly hear the *music* of the voice, the rises and falls of pitch and amplitude, the tone and timbre, the interaction of sounds and silences. In short, the methographer who postpones the use of pencil and notebook will hear precisely all the dimensions of the voice the spelling ear tunes out." (Tedlock 1983: 3-4)

My task in transcribing the recordings of my informants was primarily to present the reader with the words of those who experienced the period and topics being examined. It was for me more important to capture and present the historical reminiscence of this group of Portonians than to concentrate on "all the dimensions of the voice". I did not attempt to recreate a visual image of their speech, the character of their voice and the

numerous emotional variations and the tone and melody of their speech. Yet, I have chosen to represent something of the dialectal proclivity of the informants in my transcriptions; a bias towards the "spelling ear" method of transcription.

I did this in order to suggest that my informants were, to varying degrees, natural dialect speakers. Readers tend to interpret text written in Standard English in terms of their own pronunciation, or the pronunciation they consider most likely to be that of the fictional character or the informant in an oral transcription. I chose only to *suggest* the dialect speech of my informants and not attempt to present a written text aimed at fully recreating their spoken dialect on the page. In fact, attempts to precisely recreate spoken dialect in the written medium can often serve only to confuse all those other than linguists. However, I do believe that there is merit in suggesting dialect speech being used by the informants. We must accept that any transcription of dialect is, no matter how detailed, an interpretation of the tape and necessarily selective in what it includes and leaves out. Even Tedlock (1983:5-6), whilst advocating a holistic approach to transcriptions of the great North American aboriginal storytellers, accepts that "no score can ever be so detailed and precise as to provide for the recreation of the full sound of the tape. The audible text will remain the primary document suggesting revisions of the dictated text of the past and providing the basis for any number of future transcriptions or translations of its own contents". Adoption of the "spelling ear" method of transcription does not mean that one is setting out to regularise the natural speech habits of the informants, to present a consistent delivery of sound and dialect spelling irrespective of how the words may sound on the tape. Natural dialect speech is prone to code drifting, i.e. the tendency to drift or shift between dialect and standard pronunciation. Inconsistency in written dialect representation is in fact wholly

consistent with natural dialect speech patterns. This fundamental characteristic of dialect speech is brought out very clearly by the Glasgow writer Tom Leonard (1984:73): "But ifyi write down 'doon' wan minute, nwrite doon 'down' thi nixt, people say yir bein inconsistent. But ifyi sayti sumdy, 'Whaira yi afti?' nthey say 'What?' nyou say 'Where are you off to?' they don't say, 'That's no whutyi said thi furst time.' They'll probably say sumhm like, 'Doon thi road!' anif you say, 'What?' they usually say, 'Down the road!' the second time - though no always. Course, they never really say, 'Doon thi road!' or 'Down the road!' at all. Least, they never say it the way it's spelt. Coz it *izny* spelt, when they say it, is it?"

Chapter One

PORT GLASGOW: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT. POPULATION AND HOUSING

1.1 The Emergence of the Town

Port Glasgow owes its existence to a deep-water haven called Pot of the Rig or Potterrig, which was used as an anchorage by ships belonging to and serving the Glasgow merchants. The Clyde closer to Glasgow was too shallow for shipping and with the roads being no more than tracks, Glasgow's cargoes had to be unloaded at Potterrig into smaller crafts and taken up river (cf. Appendix Figure 4). As trade developed and the burden of taxes and local harbour dues began to bite, a solution had to be found in order to maximise profit and retain autonomy over the shipment of goods. In 1668 the Glasgow burgesses purchased a 13 acres site close to the Potterrig anchorage from Sir Patrick Maxwell of Newark (cf. Appendix Figure 5) for the price of £72.4s.5d Sterling (MacArthur 1932:18). They commissioned the building of a harbour proper, and "that year they built one pier and decided to go on with some houssis and dykis" (Grieve 1960a:11). Glasgow Town Council decided to call this new development Newport.

The Glasgow burgesses quickly established civil rule over this new port and its inhabitants. Severe consequences often followed upon evidence of anything or anybody posing a threat to the smooth running of the town's economy or contravening its laws. As early as 1670 the "baillies and counsell" of Glasgow presided over a case of local neighbourly dispute and not only banished those they found guilty, but had their home,

which would have been the property of the magistrates, pulled down as a warning to others[1]. In this they were setting the tone of their rule over their new port.

From 1685 the Glasgow burgesses and merchants established the port within a legal framework to ensure their control and continued monopoly over the trade and infrastructure of Newport. Newport was an economic investment. Not only were Glasgow merchants made to use the new port, but in fact "no inhabitant of Glasgow was to load or unload anywhere else ... No strangers were to be employed either masters or mariners, unless they came from a Royal Burgh", and anybody caught contravening these new rules was "libel to a £500 Scots fine" (Grieve 1960a:11). It has to be assumed that the Glasgow burghers kept a very tight grip on who was moving in or out of the port. They would certainly want a return on their outlay and would be keen that competition for labour, equipment and shipping resources would not affect their strategy for reimbursement and increased profit margins. One of the first men to fall foul of the new rules was a merchant who was fined "ten dollars for hiring a boat from the neighbouring town of Greenock" (Grieve 1960a:12).

For the cotton, tobacco and sugar merchants of Glasgow, Newport primarily meant a harbour and a customs point. In this sense, the social, economic and spatial development of Newport and of those who lived there was of secondary concern to the city fathers. However, since the merchant trade developing on the port's shoreline depended to some

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[1] The baillies and counsell being conveined, and taking to their consideratioune the bias and leud lyfe led and used by Alexander Gay at Newport, Glasgow, and Jeane Rankine, his spous, and their lued cariage to all maner of personis quhatsomever, and especiallie for the great abuse done to their neighbours; and seeing they now dwell in yin hous belonging to the tune, the said magistratis and consell hes unanimously concluded that the said hous they dwell in sall be immediately be pulled doune and the stones and timber thereof laid apairt, and that they nor none of them sall be suffered to dwell within the toune's bundes heirafter; and appoyntis John Herbertsoune, their servant, sie the samyne don with all expeditioune, and to caus benish the said persones out of the toune's bundes there. (Glasgow Burgh Records III:138-9; quoted from MacArthur (1932:146)).

extent on a measure of social order, the Glasgow merchants would also have been interested in the well being and peaceful development of the town if for no other reason than to protect their investment.

1.2 Picturesque to Populous: Eighteenth Century Expansion

> The magnificence of the prospect, from the hill behind the town, and even from the quays, is a natural curiosity, which deserves notice. Immediately before you is the river Clyde, having all the appearance of a fresh water lake, as the outlet to the sea is not visible, with numbers of large and small vessels sailing upon it. Next to this, the opposite coast of Dumbarton and Argyle shires, abounding in gentlemen's seats, meet the eye; and the prospect is terminated by the western range of the Grampian mountains, at equal distances, and so ragged and craggy on the tops, that, by way of contradiction, they are known here by the emphatical name of the Duke of Argyle's Bowling Green. (Forrest 1783:558)

The town itself, however, was growing and changing continuously. Between its inception in 1668 and 1700, the town's population had risen to around 400 and it continued to increase apace during the eighteenth century. The table below (MacArthur 1932:226) shows that over the forty-year period between c1700 and 1740, the population of the town quadrupled, and that by 1760 the population was more than six times its 1700 level.

Population of Newport 1700 - 1760

date	number
1700	c.350 - 400
1718	c.800
1730	1426
1740	1560
1760	2600

Table 1

By the mid 1700s, Newport's population consisted mainly of permanent settlers who inhabited the confined shoreward space. Many of the small lanes and closes became continually cramped as houses were 'made down' to accommodate lodgers, and in some cases to make way for a pub. The heavy trade coming through Newport brought with it a large transient population of sailors who cared little about their temporary home. "The town was always filled with sailors from many lands, and ... drunken seamen were just as numerous here as in all the other seaports in Britain. In fact, the number of pubs was phenomenal." (Bowie 1975:9)

By the 1790s, when Newport had a population of about 3000, the town boasted no fewer than 81 licensed houses "besides several others which deal clandestinely in these articles without any license at all" (Forrest 1783:558).

Despite the unquestionably dramatic setting with its wide expanse of water, the rolling hills of the Dunbartonshire coast immediately across the river, and the spectacular scenery of Argyllshire's mountainous terrain in the near distance, the town itself was becoming increasingly crowded due to a combination of naturally confined space and an increasing population. However, the town did not expand in a completely arbitrary fashion.

1.3 A Planned and Ordered Town

In 1668 houses were purposely built according to the plans and specifications of the Glasgow burgesses (Grieve 1960a: 11). In the 1700s, the town's development again owed more to engineering than accident. "Streets were appearing, laid out at right angles to each other according to a set plan, and lined by houses which were also built to plan" (Grieve

1960b:13). "It was a beautiful town in those days, its custom house and churches handsome and its houses nearly all two storeys, whitewashed, and with crow-stepped gables." (Grieve 1960a:12)

An artist's impression of 1768 shows these two-storied dwellings and also the more ambitious developments of the time (cf. Appendix Figure 6). The more substantial buildings of three and four storeys, which appear at the east end of the harbour and close to the river just beyond the ships, include the custom-house. Built in 1754, the custom-house was the architectural and physical manifestation of the colonial trade to which the town owed its existence, as well as the outward representation of the merchants' political power over the town and their authority over the trade passing through it. With the ancient towns and customs ports of Greenock and Dumbarton nearby, the new town of Newport's swift acquisition of an impressive custom-house was very significant. Dumbarton on the opposite bank of the river was a Royal Burgh and claimed "in the teeth of various Acts of Parliament and legal judgements" (Grieve 1960b:13) that it had a monopoly of trade on the Clyde. Glasgow merchants and ship owners paid their customs dues at Newport to the continual annoyance of Dumbarton Council, who occasionally sent raiding parties across the Clyde to seize ships lying at anchor. It can thus be surmised that the custom-house in Newport housed a band of militiamen as well as officials. This might be yet another reason, perhaps, why Glasgow Councillors were keen to monitor the residents of the town.

1.4 Westward Expansion in the Eighteenth Century

The town developed in a westward direction from the start because the west was the only possible route for expansion. The eastern fringe of the town as shown in Figure 6 depicts a swift landward incline not far from the shore. In the south-east the rope works, the rope walk of which features long and prominently in the foreground of Figure 6, effectively curtailed any development. Further east was Newark Castle and the estate of Sir Patrick Maxwell. The north offered only water.

A plan of the town in 1799 depicts different stages of the town's development (cf. Appendix Figure 7). Reading from the right hand side of the map, sections AB represent the earliest period up to 1668. This strip of land, Potterrigg, looked out onto the bay and housed the inhabitants of the hamlet of Newark. Newark is described by Thomas Tucker, Registrar to the Commissioners of Excise in England, despatched to report on Scottish excise and customs procedures, in his report to Oliver Cromwell in 1665, as "a small place where there are (besides the laird's house of the place) some foure or five houses, but before them a pretty good roade where all vessels doe ride, unlade and send theyr goods up the river top Glasgowe in small boates; and at this place there is wayter[2] constantly attending" (Marwick 1909:95).

Sections BC represent the area largely developed in the first half of the eighteenth century (1700-1754). This period witnessed the establishment of the customs house in 1707 and the erection of bonded warehouses on the site just west of what would later become the dry dock, the beginnings of the harbour with quay walls and piers, and the erection of the

[2] A wayter was a customs officer responsible for overseeing shipping movements at the port.

church. These developments made it necessary for housing and smaller domestic type infrastructure to develop to the west of the Newport settlement.

Sections CD represent the second half of the eighteenth century (1754-1799). In this period, the harbour and the extension of the bonded warehousing were completed, a new customs house and associated offices were established on the west quay (1754), and a shipbuilding business (1783) and a wet dock (c.1800) were created. In 1865 a local Police Act required by the Town Council to extend the western boundary of the town, fixed the town's western boundary for all time.

Figure 6 displays the varying nature of the expansions occurring over different periods. Whilst both the Newark / Newport (AB) and early Newport / New Port Glasgow (BC) areas show a tightly contained development, the later section (CD) suggests a more spacious layout in the sense that it shows more in the way of streets and fewer lanes and closes.

1.5 The Beginnings of the Burgh

Through the influence and patronage of the families whose names are among those immortalised on the town's streets and thoroughfares[3], Port Glasgow[4] flourished, and for one hundred years from its inception it continually grew in importance and size. As a result of the shipping trade and mercantile trades pursued by the Glasgow burgesses, Port Glasgow developed its own rope and sail works, ships chandlery businesses and other auxiliary trades. Other industries included sugar refining - two refineries existed, one at either end of

[3] Hunter's Close, Lyon's Close, Scott's Lane, Wood Lane, Barr's Brae, Campbell Street, King Street, William's Street, and Crawford Street were all named after powerful figures in the town who had strong connections with Glasgow such as baron baillies appointed by the city fathers and members of the Glasgow merchant families.

the town - and timber distribution. An off-shoot of the shipping trade, the latter business became a major industry and took up much of the eastern shorefront of the town with 'log-ponds' designed to store the timber arriving from North America. The town also maintained a market garden industry which dated from before the advent of the merchant trades. Their major produce was "magnum bonum" plums and strawberries. As late as the 1850s, the Port was sending fruit to Covent Garden, London (Bowie 1975:1).

In 1774 the town became a Burgh of Barony, thus forming a local council under the authority of and responsible to Glasgow City Council. This system remained intact until the installation of the town's own council and provost following local government reforms in 1832.

Negotiations to wrest some form of autonomy from Glasgow began as early as 1770. The population by then included third and fourth generation Portonians who were less inclined to remain loyal to the Glasgow link that had provided their fathers and grandfathers with their economic prosperity. The Glasgow magistrates yielded to the proposals of the Port Glasgow merchants and recorded their requirements to allow the commencement of a move towards partial autonomy: "Appoint the dean of guild to write to the people in Port Glasgow to committ to writeing and transmitt to the magistrates their proposalls with respect to what priveleges or grants they want from this city and what considerations they will give therefor, and appoint their offerrs to be reported in councill."[5]

On 19 July 1774 a contract between the community and feuars of Port Glasgow and Newark and the Corporation of Glasgow was drawn up. On 4 October all the feuars of Port

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[4] By 1770, Newport had become known as Port Glasgow.
[5] Glasgow Burgh Records VII:323, quoted from MacArthur (1932:163).

Glasgow and Newark met in the parish church to elect twelve trustees to the Council[6].

This new and relatively prosperous burgh was soon to face a period of economic depression and uncertainty. Only one year after its creation, its major source of income was being threatened by the American War of Independence (1775-1783). The Clyde-based merchant trade suffered mainly because of debt. Obstacles created by the hostilities meant that "the level of debt owed to the Glasgow merchants remained considerable when commercial intercourse with the colonies was interrupted in 1775. The trading community itself estimated unrecovered assets and debts at over £1,300,000." (Devine1990:114) In terms of imports there remained, at least in the early days of the hostilities, a vibrant trade for the larger companies able to raise cash to purchase goods directly from the colonies. In this climate smaller businesses and traders suffered, whilst wealthier merchants were able to stockpile imports bought with hard cash. Glasgow merchants, practising the direct method of purchasing, capitalised on the market in colonial tobacco trade in 1775 and loaded the warehouses to overflowing. "Warehouses at Port Glasgow and Greenock were so overstretched that 'temporary sheds' and private stores had to be filled but in early 1776 there was still a good deal of tobacco which [could not] be landed for want of a place to put it in." (Devine 1990:108) The rich merchants were making the most of an economic opportunity in

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[6] The following were the members of the first Town Council: Alexander Mollison, surgeon; James King, senior, merchant; James King, junior, merchant; James Ramsey, merchant; John Dunlop, merchant; Bailie John Crawford, merchant; Humphrey Colquhoun, feur; James Aitken, merchant; William Howall, merchant; William Dunlop, shipmaster; John Barr, junior, clockmaker; and Robert Douglas, merchant. They were to continue in office till the first Tuesday after 29th September, 1775. Only feurs who owned property of the value of at least £10 per annum were eligible. Mr John Martin, a writer in Port Glasgow, was appointed to be the first Town Clerk, at a salary of £10 per annum. The bellman received £4 6s. 8d., the drummer £1, and the two officers were supplied with suits of clothes for common wear. (Glasgow Burgh Records VII:428-9; quoted from MacArthur (1932:166)).

the early days of the American War of Independence while smaller merchants were already looking towards new investments.

1.6 Economic Metamorphosis and the Road to Political Independence

Increasing numbers of Glasgow merchants began to divert the capital they had previously invested in shipping to manufacturers, principally of cotton goods[7], which Richard Arkwright's waterframe spinning invention of 1768 made more economically viable by increasing the scale of production possibilities. Whether through foresight about the American situation, or purely through the opportunities being created by engineering advancements by the 1770s, the city fathers were already moving to protect their long-term interests. In 1773 they hired the expertise of John Goldborne, a Cheshire canal engineer, to work on the construction of a deep water channel to allow ships to travel right up the Clyde to Glasgow. It would be some time before square-riggers were plying their trade to the Broomielaw, but before too long, smaller boats were making the trip. "By January 1775, vessels drawing six feet were able to reach the Broomielaw" (MacArthur 1932:86) (cf. Appendix Figure 8).

With the end of the War of Independence in 1783, harbour trade picked up and the Port benefited from the importation of cotton from North America and from trade in lumber with Brazil and other South American countries (MacArthur 1932:77). However, the centre of the coastal trade became the City of Glasgow itself. Port Glasgow could not recapture the pre-war market and suffered a decrease in shipping trade. In 1811, the coasting trade of Port

[7] The raw material for these cotton manufactures was largely of West Indian origin.

Glasgow still employed some 400 vessels and 1300 seamen, but nearly the whole of this portion of the trade had been lost by 1835. However, it was not only the deepening of the Clyde that led to the decrease in trade to Port Glasgow. In 1812 Port Glasgow ceased to be the head port of the Clyde and Glasgow and Greenock were declared independent ports. In 1828 Glasgow was made an East Indian port and tobacco and tea were made privileges of the port of Glasgow in 1832 and 1834 respectively (MacArthur 1932:94).

Furthermore, from 1809 Glasgow vessels were being registered at Glasgow; this meant a departure from traditional registration requirements which demanded that ship owners register their vessels at Port Glasgow or Greenock. The Registry Act of 1824 required that vessels be registered at the port where their owners resided. These developments in conjunction with the increasing navigability of the upper reaches of the Clyde damaged the shipping trade at Port Glasgow.

Population of Port Glasgow 1775 - 1861

date	number	date	number
1775-83	3894	1831	5192
1786-90	4036	1835	6018
1801	3865	1841	6938
1811	5116	1851	6986
1821	5262	1861	7294

Table 2

These statistics (MacArthur 1932:226) show the town in a period stagnation in terms of population growth between 1811 and the 1830s. Perhaps this reflects the effect on the town of Glasgow's newfound statutory shipping and customs rights during this period. Nevertheless, the population was growing.

The casual and unpredictable employment situation that the town offered, as it went through the transition from a shipping to a shipbuilding economy, was unsettling. Every effort was made by the town council to maintain law and order in this situation. A common course of action taken by the council in this period when dealing with "rogues and vagabonds" caught in the act of attacking property rights was to have them expelled from the town.

> I recollect of a man being drummed out of town for stealing two 56 pound weights from the bonded store in Chapel Lane, and on his back was hung a bill with the words 'Rogue and Vagabond'. He was handcuffed, and as soon as the Glen Bridge was reached, he was let go, when he took to his heels and ran as fast as his feet would carry him, pelted with stones by the crowd of boys who followed him. (*Greenock Telegraph* 9.3.1907)

A more serious concern for the town council and employers in the town in the early decades of the nineteenth century was the potential for violence towards the representatives of authority in the shape of attacks upon the militia. On April 1, 1820, the Port Glasgow Volunteers (sharp shooters) were escorting five radical weavers to Greenock goal:

> The weavers were placed in a cart and the whole party arrived at Bank Street, Greenock, where the prison was, the band playing martial tunes. About 6 p.m. the Volunteers started to march home, just when the public works were closing down for the day, and an immense crowd gathered, which surrounded and followed them, adopting a hostile attitude and throwing stones. This continued till the point where the Victoria Harbour now is, when the Volunteers, without the authority of any Magistrate or the reading of the Riot Act, fired on the crowd, killing and wounding about twenty people, many of whom were quite innocent of any offence and merely happened to be passing. Later on in the evening the gaol gate was smashed open and the weavers released, and they were never recaptured. (*Greenock Telegraph* 16.3.1907)

In the 1830s and 1840s, the violent fluctuations of shipbuilding reflected the troubled state of Britain's overseas trade during these years. The burden of adjustment to these fluctuations was felt disproportionately in Scotland where industry was already heavily committed to

exports. It is significant that in the parliamentary debates on the extent of unemployment during the depression year of 1842, one of the highest figures cited was for Greenock, where about 60% of the workforce was said to be without employment (Dickson 1980:197). Port Glasgow shared the distress of the shipbuilding industry and those who were dependent on it for employment. Yet, it was this shipbuilding industry with its attendant boom and bust fluctuations that came to dominate the Port and provide the area's industrial basis for generations to come. By this time too, the dependency link to Glasgow had been broken. The Reform Act of 1832 had given the town political independence from the Glasgow burgesses. The Port was now a municipal burgh in its own right with the power to elect its own councillors and provost.

1.7 Shipping to Shipbuilding

From the mid to the late nineteenth century shipbuilding firmly embedded itself as the town's core industry. However, it was not completely new to the area. Scott's of Greenock had been building ships (Herring Busses) since 1711 (cf. Appendix Figure 9), and although Port Glasgow itself started much later, the commercial building of ships was being pursued from 1780. The first Port shipbuilder to get his name recorded was Thomas McGill, who set up a yard close to the Newark Castle (now Ferguson Shipbuilders Ltd.). In 1780 McGill's yard constructed an 18-gun ship called the "Jessie" (Grieve 1960c:8). John Wood senior, whose son would build the 'Comet' in 1812, opened his yard on the west side of the town centre in 1783 (cf. Appendix Figure 10). Between them, McGill and Wood built 51 ships totalling a berth weight of 6,192 tons over the period 1783-1792.

The growth of the town's shipbuilding industry was part of the general and dramatic rise in heavy industries in nineteenth century Scotland. Although in the middle of the century, textiles dominated the economy, it is accurate to say that by the 1870s approximately 25,000 men were employed in Scottish shipyards. Estimates place at least 20,000 of these workers in the Clyde yards (Lenman 1977:180).

The general trend of increasing building capacity and population growth continued, but not in a continuous and uninterrupted manner. In Port Glasgow, as in other industrial towns, it did so in sharp bursts which were followed by equally spectacular slumps. These slumps destroyed the weaker of the shipbuilding companies and many yards failed under different owners. However, entrepreneurs stood to reap generous rewards if their calculations and efforts were successful. When William Todd Lithgow died in 1908 at the age of 54, he left a fortune of £1,055,355 to his family. His thirty years' service to the building of ships had paid him handsomely (NAS: SC58/45/16: 237-436).

Not everyone enjoyed success like W.T. Lithgow; many lost their investments. When Lawrence Hill's shipbuilding business collapsed in 1870 it brought him before the bankruptcy courts where he declared liabilities worth £27,479. His assets taken into consideration, he was left with a deficiency of £17,000. This substantial debt was, in his opinion, due to the vagaries of the shipbuilding industry at this time. He claimed that his company suffered "heavy losses in the business during the last five or six years, chiefly in entering in contracts at too cheap a rate and keeping vessels in hand without making a market" (NAS: CS318/1873/143). Nevertheless, the early shipbuilders and engineers in Port Glasgow realised that the future lay in their hands rather than those of the old merchant and

shipping masters. This advance of industrialists was not to the liking of some prominent members of the community.

1.8 Merchants *versus* Industrialists

The onset of industrialisation, which attracted newcomers to the town seeking employment in the labour-intensive industry of shipbuilding, compounded rather than alleviated the concerns of ordinary Portonians because of the shipyards' tendency towards booms and slumps. The great expansion of the shipbuilding industry in Scotland generally took place in the years after 1850. From the 1870s until the First World War, the Scottish shipbuilding industry experienced continuous growth (Campbell 1971:231). Yet, even in periods of expansion the shipbuilding industry was prone to fluctuations in demand, precipitating the sort of casual and unstable work environment which became synonymous with the shipyards (Dickson 1980:197). Lawrence Hill's experience in the 1870s was not unique among the shipbuilders, nor was it simply a case of slack management. The growth of urban-industrial centres like Port Glasgow meant a population dependant upon low and infrequent wages, the classic conditions for ghetto creation. If anything, this served to focus the Portonians' vision on the shipyards and their owners, at least occasionally, as the source of their problems.

The shipyard owner, unlike the Glasgow merchant, tended to live in the town. He was to some extent accessible and whenever the need arose, the workers could aim their anger and frustration at their employer. The shipyards were bringing the labourers of the town together in a place of employment such as they had never known in the height of the merchant

trading days. Working together in the same bleak and cold conditions by the river's edge, in the same volatile industry for the same employer, striving towards the completion of the same floating hulk: all that galvanised them into combination and, later, into trade unionism.

Interestingly, in the embryonic days of industrial trade unionism in Port Glasgow, the notion of worker combination occasionally served to bring the workers onto the streets supporting the aims of the industrialists. Rather than campaigning against the shipbuilding employers the workers were known to have demonstrated in favour of the new industrialist class against the wishes of the old patriarchal shipping masters and merchants:

> Upon the twentieth day of March, one thousand eight hundred and fifty a number of riotous and evil disposed persons, workmen and labourers in the employment of John Reid and Company, Shipbuilders in Port Glasgow ... did, wickedly and feloniously assemble on the streets of Port Glasgow and ... did in a riotous and tumultuous manner proceed through various streets in the said town with a Tar Barrel and other combustible substance in flames, and two effigies, one representing the figure of a man and the other the figure of a woman, and did stop with the said burning materials and effigies in front of the respective dwelling houses of Walter McLachlan, Merchant residing in Belhaven Street in Port Glasgow and of Matthew Laird, senior, Merchant residing there and did set fire to the said effigies and did shout and howl and utter groans and hisses and other sounds of disapprobation and throw stones at the door of the house of the said Walter McLachlan to the great terror and alarm of himself and wife and servants and of the said Matthew Laird who happened to be in the house ... at the time. (NAS: CS249/3683) (cf. Appendix Fig.11)

The struggle between the old and new industries in Port Glasgow, as portrayed in the case of Reid versus McLachlan and Laird in 1850, was a public display of the frustration and antagonism between the interests of the merchant and the shipbuilding classes. It was a sign of desperation among the old trading class in the town, who were watching their political power base being lost to the new shipbuilding masters. The shipbuilding masters were, by the mid nineteenth century, set to eclipse the shipping and trading families as the main employer of labour and resources in Port Glasgow.

It could be said that the support shown for John Reid's shipbuilding business by his workers was indicative of a contention among the labouring classes that the shipyards were the new employment saviours. However, a patriarchal hold over the town's labour force, a remnant of the old merchant society, was incorporated into the shipyard environment by the new employers; their method of sustaining this hold over the workers was through the foremen or charge hands responsible for the employment and management of labour, who were drawn from the local labour force. Interestingly, following the riots of 1850 the only prosecution that resulted was that of Mr Sutherland, foreman of Reid's workers, who was charged with breach of the peace (NAS: CS249/3683).

As time went on, shipyards became a more established economic and industrial feature of the Port. The Bay Yard gained a reputation as a bogus yard, having seen off many budding industrialists from its establishment in the 1830s. When in 1874 it was re-opened by Russell and Co., having recently ruined Messrs MacFadyen, no one gave it much hope. Yet, in their first year Russell and Co. launched 2000 tons, in 1879 they acquired the bankrupt yard at Cartsdyke, Greenock, and only two years later they purchased a green field site at Kingston, Port Glasgow, on which they constructed a six-berth yard (cf. Appendix Figure 12). In the ten-year period between 1882 and 1892, the company launched 271 ships grossing a remarkable 456,566 tons. They were by far the most productive and important shipbuilding company on the Clyde and under the management of the Lithgow family went on to become one of the world's largest shipyards. By 1890 it was claimed that "no other yard shipbuilding firm in the world can touch them" (*The Engineer* 1891:187).

1.9 Seaport to Industrial Inferno

However piecemeal the change from shipping to shipbuilding was, its effect was to fundamentally change the way in which the community earned its income. As the yards became imbedded in the industrial scene of the Port, the employers increasingly became the focus for discontent among the workers who, in turn, were becoming more experienced in the ways of combination and trade affiliation. This focal point of people's grievances was of course a workplace phenomenon, but it also had sway in the wider community with regard to housing, sanitation, and other social issues. Of course, the employers also cultivated an air of superiority, living in their large square mansions on the outskirts of the town. The shipbuilding masters who were viewed as locals, and who had lived in the town, also moved to the healthier spaces on the periphery of the town as the industry changed the nature of the town centre. "Purely residential places grew up in the vicinities of towns where the employer classes mostly transferred themselves and by so doing lost touch with the places where their fortunes had been made." (MacArthur 1932:189)

Bemoaning the middle class's migration to the outskirts of the town, MacArthur looks back with nostalgia to the days when the "fatherly" benevolence of the employing classes precipitated order and social harmony: "The well-to-do lived in and took part in the social, municipal and other activities of the town. There was no ill-feeling between one section of society and another." (MacArthur 1932:189)

The movement of the middle classes to the outlying areas of the town was caused by the rapid increase of the population, which also forced a further burden on the already stretched social capital of the town. From the early 1860s, as the shipbuilding industry became more

dominant in the town, the increase in population was remarkable.

Population of Port Glasgow between 1861-1881[8]

date	number
1861	7924
1871	10823
1881	13224

Table 3

When comparing the increase of the Port's population between the periods 1801-1861[9] and 1861-1881, we see that the latter 20-year period witnessed an increase of 5930, whereas the earlier, much longer, period saw a comparatively small increase of 3429. "The rapid increase in population necessitated an extension of the burgh and in 1865, under the Port Glasgow Police Act, a portion of what had previously been the parish of Greenock was taken over, which allowed Port Glasgow to spread westwards to the point now known as Boundary Street." (MacArthur 1932:190)[10]

Despite the burgh extension in 1865, no building of dwelling houses for the incoming population took place there. In fact, almost thirty years would pass before tenement buildings were erected on that site. Mr Lauder in his *Memories of Princess Street UP Church* claims that in 1861 "new buildings suddenly sprang up to accommodate the growing population" (Lauder in MacArthur 1932:190). However, there is little evidence to support this claim. Neither the valuation rolls nor the Dean of Guild records for the time record

[8] Cf. MacArthur 1932: 226

[9] Cf. table 2, p.44 above.

[10] Cf. Appendix Figure 11. Boundary Street is highlighted as lot 875. Interestingly, this plan, dated 1880, shows no evidence of housing developments in the area of Boundary Street.

building projects of this scale or nature. Of course, destitute families often take refuge in properties which might not show up on official records, e.g. in derelict properties, and the Port had its fair share of run-down and deserted buildings. Mr Kerr in his memoirs recalls how one of the Port's old sugar-houses was converted into homes to cope with the rising population (Kerr s.d.:193-?). Like any other expanding industrial town, the Port provided property speculators with a housing market and houses were indeed built, but they tended to be houses affordable only to those in the better-paid shipyard jobs.

McBride and Sons, local entrepreneurs in the later nineteenth century, were responsible for ventures like Content Place, a three-close four-storey tenement built in the Port's Glen Avenue in 1881, and similar constructions around the town. But all of these were designed for workers with steady and better-paid employment, i.e. for foremen and craftsmen. McBride rarely, if ever, built houses for the labouring classes. Speculators and builders making capital investments in building houses for lease rental were concerned to be as certain as they could of receiving regular rent. No such certainty existed when the rentier was a shipyard labourer.

It is quite correct to see a correlation between the rise in the shipbuilding industry and the increase in population in Port Glasgow. But not everyone or every family gained employment from being in close proximity to the shipyards, and even fewer acquired a longer-term job. These jobs were exclusive either to the indigenous workers who had developed the relevant skills, or to those brought in especially by the firm to fill the post.

Statistics compiled to highlight the status of the growing Irish male workforce in the shipbuilding community of Govan, further up the Clyde, serve to illustrate the general

situation regarding the employment of Irish labour, or rather the lack of employment for Irish labour in the recognised shipyard trades, towards the end of the nineteenth century.

Craft grades in Govan shipyards 1891

	hours per week	wages	total workforce	Lowland workforce	Highland workforce	Irish workforce
carpenters	54	38s 3d	8%	12%	9%	0%
boilermakers	54	37s 0d	6%	10%	9%	0%
shipwrights	54	36s 0d	6%	9%	9%	0%
engineers / fitters	54	34s 0d	13%	21%	14%	0%
four crafts total			33%	52%	32%	0%

Table 4

This table (Campbell 1986:10) indicates the status of the Irish labourers in the new industrial communities of Lowland Scotland in the 1890s. Although they were arriving in great numbers to add to the demand on social resources, they were not encroaching upon the more prestigious shipyard trades.

In line with the general trend of population increase in Scotland, many of those arriving in Port Glasgow in the last third of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century were of Irish origin. No figures are available for the Irish arriving specifically to Port Glasgow. However, Handley's (1932:324) figures show the number of Irish born in Scotland for the period 1841-1881 as follows:

Irish born in Scotland 1841-1881

date	number
1841	126,321
1851	207,367
1861	204,083
1871	207,770
1881	218,745

Table 5

The census returns for Scotland in 1891 gives the number of Irish born as 194,807 in a total population of 4,025.647, or 4.48%. Collins (1991:11) confirms Handley's figures, saying that the trend between 1851 and 1871 remained virtually static at 207.000 and suggests that an average of around 8000 new Irish immigrants arrived in Scotland each year in the 1850s and the 1860s. Although they hardly formed an overwhelming proportion of the population, their tendency to congregate in the industrial centres of the country intensified opinion against them. The Port's Catholic community numbered 332 according to the entry in the *New Statistical Account* (Barr 1836:71).

This community grew in number and stature and was soon demanding its own place of worship. When the Roman Catholic Church was opened in 1854, it was designed to serve a congregation of "2000 souls". By 1895 the church required an extension to accommodate a congregation now estimated to be around 4000 (anon. 1954:11). The Irish Catholic immigrants tended to occupy the meanest dwellings. The Port's Bay Area with its maze-like amalgam of lanes, closes and vennels (cf. Appendix Figure 13) became home to many of these new labouring families.

1.10 Housing by Benevolence

The last decade of the nineteenth century saw the Government introduce the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, which signalled a growing recognition of the mounting problems associated with inadequate and insufficient housing for the labouring classes. The swelling of the population by the Irish immigrants had not a little to do with this, especially in areas of industrial development, where the Irish congregated (cf. Appendix Figure 14). Yet, even after some years of improvement, Port Glasgow in 1911 ranked among the most overcrowded towns in Britain. With 66.7% of the population living in one room with more than two persons, the Port registered a degree of overcrowding ten times that of Manchester or Hull. In a Scottish context, Port Glasgow came among the top eight burghs suffering overcrowding in 1911.

Overcrowded housing in Scottish burghs (Census 1911)

	% of persons living more than ...		
	2 per room	**3 per room**	**4 per room**
Kilsyth	71.6	47.8	28.2
Coatbridge	71.2	45.0	23.7
Wishaw	70.1	45.1	24.2
Clydebank	69.0	38.2	14.8
Motherwell	68.1	40.3	19.2
Cowdenbeath	67.6	37.1	14.0
Port Glasgow	**66.7**	**36.9**	**16.1**
Hamilton	65.7	40.3	19.7

Table 6

Dire living conditions and insanitary streets led local commentators to ponder the reasons for such a downturn in the town's once vaunted features. This was generally considered to be the cost of industrialisation and the downside of cultivating a shipbuilding industry in the town. "The lack of suitable housing and other causes produced many social and economic difficulties which converted Port Glasgow and other Clydeside towns into what till 1900 can only be described as industrial infernos" (MacArthur 1932:189).

The first large-scale building operation to take place in the Port was the Bouverie Street development in 1865 (cf. Appendix Figure 19). Bouverie Street was situated immediately behind the Gourock Ropework on the east side of town. Not only was it a mammoth task for the mid 1860s to produce a large street of four storey tenements; what is more, this project was undertaken solely by the Gourock Ropework Company in order to provide housing for their workers. There was only one major ropeworks in the town, and it did not represent the capital goods industry that shipbuilding was. However, the Gourock Ropework supplied a range of shipping companies with products for their vessels as well as other industries requiring rope products and was thus not solely dependent on the local shipbuilding industry for its lifeblood.

Shipyard owners in Port Glasgow at that time were not established enough to consider such a long-term, large-scale investment as homes for their workers. And as the rather unstable nature of the industry was to show, such a diverse and solid foundation as that enjoyed by the Gourock Ropework was never really developed.

The Glen Area, gained by the local authority following the boundary extension in 1865,

was eventually developed into six large streets of four storey tenements: Ardgowan Street, Clyde Street, Houston Street, Argyll Street, Boundary Street, and Inchgreen Street. The tenements were housing mainly the employees of the shipyards across the street (cf. Appendix Figure 20). Shipbuilding families owned some of the tenements, whilst others were the property of small businessmen, merchants, lawyers, property speculators and widows. When Lawrence Hill gave evidence of his assets to the Sheriff substitute of Renfrewshire at Greenock Sheriff Court on 23 September 1870, he claimed that the property of the shipyard was feued by him in 1852 and "an additional piece of ground on the opposite side of the Port Glasgow road on which to build workmen's houses". He went on to say that the money for this venture had been gained through a loan from Joseph Russell (Russell & Co. shipbuilders) and that a bond and disposition in security for the loan of £4000 had been drawn up "over said dwelling houses" (NAS: CS318/1873/143).

By the turn of the century, the Bay Area (cf. Appendix Figure 15) was considered the most crowded and disease-ridden place in the town. Although the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, gave the authority the power to demolish insanitary dwellings, it made no provision for financial aid to build replacement housing in order to re-house displaced families. It was not until after a public enquiry of 1903, which condemned the four crowded acres of the Bay Area, and intimations from W.T. Lithgow, shipbuilder, of his willingness to donate at least £10,000 towards a project of demolition and rebuilding, that it became possible for the local authority to consider clearing the Bay Area. The scheme was brought into operation under the provisions of the 1890 Act, and the seventeenth and eighteenth century houses of the old town of Newark (the Bay Area), with its old closes and vennels

and nineteenth century tenements pegged onto the backs of the older buildings without regard to light, air or sanitation, were demolished. (cf. Appendix Figures 16-18).

The decayed and stinking vennels were to be replaced by solidly built redstone tenements and shops, and a modern hotel. Nevertheless, the town remained almost as crowded when the change was over: there were 369 new houses in place of the 483 dens that had disappeared. As Mr Christopher Nicholson Johnstone, K. C. (Lord Sands) as commissioner of the 1903 enquiry had remarked, the renovation "convert[ed] what had been an insanitary warren into a sanitary one" (MacArthur 1932:192). Following the completion of the Bay Area renovations, Lithgow through the auspices of the Bay Area Trust handed the running of the scheme over to the Town Council.

By 1911 the community had largely positioned itself around the workplaces in order of personal priority, i.e. shipyard workers at the Glen and mill workers at the east end. The Bay Area housed the largest proportion of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, and the legal mechanics of the renovation project left the Town Council ultimately responsible for the properties. Before the renovation, the Bay Area had been home to 2007 people (MacArthur 1932:192). Semi-skilled and unskilled workers who originally inhabited the Bay returned after the renovations. Those who lost out to new but fewer homes simply lodged with whoever offered them the "good room". The Bay quickly became slum status housing again.

Many of the old Bay Area houses were without any proper water or sanitation facilities. The new houses had these facilities installed, but not all appliances for every home. A sink with running cold water was provided, but toilet facilities were regularly shared by three or more families in the Bay tenements. The heavy and sustained use of the close lavatory

facilities in these buildings led to constant faults that often caused raw sewage to overflow onto the stairs. This one example is sufficient to indicate the problems which had to be faced by the tenants of these new and "most modern" Bay tenements. It is reasonable to assume that the Glen tenements and Bouverie, having been built much earlier, were no better and probably worse.

Only one other large-scale building project was undertaken in the Port prior to the inter-war period. This development took place during the Great War and was again supported by the Lithgow family. Clune Park on the eastern edge of the town was developed into tenement housing to assist with the influx of workers arriving to seek work in the shipyards at that time. The race to accommodate war-effort workers was being repeated in all the major industrial centres but was having a critical effect in the shipbuilding towns. "The pre-war (1914-1918) housing surplus of Glasgow was quickly eaten up by the Government's policy of bringing extra labour in this area ... The pressure on housing was particularly acute in the areas around the shipbuilding yards." (Dickson 1980:274)

There was indeed a housing crisis on Clydeside at this time, even if there is a longstanding debate over the link between this situation and the industrial unrest which was prevalent at this time and the root cause and effect of the shortage[11]. With regard to the construction of housing, the war effort greatly hampered the profit motivation of property developers by restricting their traditional access to financial assistance from the lending institutions. High interest rates, which were precipitated by the wartime economy, effectively debarred speculators from borrowing and many builders contented themselves with the income they

[11] Cf. Melling (1983, 1990), Hinton (1973), McLean (1983), and Gallacher (1978).

could generate through leasing the property they already owned. Speculators and property developers were intensely protective of their profit margin and reacted swiftly to preserve their investment at the first sign of encroachment indirectly from the economy or from direct Government action on property legislation. Morgan cites the example of the Glasgow builder Archibald Stewart who wrote to Sir John Lindsay following the budget of 1909 - 1910, which introduced an Increment Duty on underdeveloped building sites and ground annuals, claiming that the 1910 Finance Act was an attack on the commercial freedom of builders[12]. Complaining that the Act served to tax builders out of business, Stewart ceased his building operations and turned "to the full time management of the properties he had retained as investments" (Morgan 1989:130). This situation served to bring about increased rents on many working class tenement properties. At the same time, the very active Clyde Workers Committee, whose supporters included the radical socialists and anti-war protagonists John MacLean, Harry McShane and Willie Gallagher, advocated a programme of action on the issue of demarcation, wages and conditions in the shipyards and engineering works on the Clyde. Whether inspired by the actions of the Clydeside workers, or simply driven to action by their own desperate surroundings, the women of the shipbuilding and engineering communities on Clydeside embarked on rent strikes and organised intimidation of tenement factors and bailiffs carrying out eviction notices in an effort to articulate their anger over what they considered blatant rack-renting. The intersection of rent strike and industrial unrest was viewed with great seriousness, and not just by Clydeside employers. The importance of such connections was not lost on the

[12] Cf. also Murray (1980).

Government who quickly introduced a bill in November 1915 to restrict rent increases (Dickson 1980:274).

This marked the beginning of the end of all-powerful landlordism. The Rent and Mortgage Interest (War Restrictions) Act 1915, which was subsequently extended and enhanced in 1919, was the kind of legislation detested by Stewart and his contemporaries as restrictive to their business interests.

Consequently, from November 1915 onwards, private individuals and property development companies viewed the building and administering of private dwellings as increasingly less attractive. It is claimed that as a result of such Government action in the property market "almost a generation of builders withdrew from business and it is a surprise that there were any builders in the city [Glasgow] left to take up the challenge in 1919" (Morgan 1989: 131). Since the municipal provision of housing was very sketchy in this early period, certainly by the 1920s or early 1930s the shortage of housing was becoming a social issue of the highest order. These developments and issues affected Port folk as much, if not more, than others. The demands of the 1914-1915 war effort were pursued as vigorously and had the same socio-economic and industrial impact in Port Glasgow that it had in Glasgow: increased production, an influx of labour and major housing shortages.

The Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909 consolidated the provisions of the Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890 and reinforced the powers of local authorities to demolish slum properties. However, this consolidating act again failed to tackle the issue of rebuilding schemes and the provision for government assistance in doing so. It supported local authorities in their powers to demolish, but failed to specify a duty to demolish and to

provide exchequer assistance for rebuilding. In the absence of central Government assistance, there was no point building housing for the working classes if they were not going to be able to afford the necessarily high rent.

Port Glasgow could rely on neither large-scale speculative builders nor sponsored organisations set up under local acts to deal with the issue of the housing of the working classes independently or in conjunction with local authorities. The Port could not rely, either, on the financially unassisted town council to embark on expensive building programmes. Private small-time speculators formed the majority house building interest in the Port and the few large-scale housing developments that Portonians witnessed, like Bouverie Street and the Bay Area, depended on local industrialists for the financial assistance to build. The wartime economy brought about the necessity to consider another major development; again, this was dependent on the influence and resources accessible to the local industrial giants rather than the local authority.

Again, the Lithgow family stepped into the breach and took charge of providing housing to accommodate the needs of the war-effort workforce. The Clune Park scheme consisted of five four-storey tenement streets running off the old Glasgow Road which would itself contain tenements to link the streets and so create a back court drying area enclosed on three sides for tenants. "When Clune Park was built with the aid of an Admiralty Grant, it was not possible to build to the same standard [as the Bay Area]. The first World War had broken out producing an influx of workers into the town and a great shortage of building materials. Timber and plumbing were especially hard to come by. ... Clune Park [Glasgow Road] has never had bathrooms." (anon. 1960:2)

So soon after expending a large sum on the Bay Area development, Lithgow chose to rely on an "Admiralty Grant" to build these houses. However, they were considered not to be sufficient for the purpose (anon. 1960:2). In fact, these inferior quality houses were more than simply architecturally inadequate, they were a recognised health hazard.

> They were older and we'd an awful lot o' bother wi' rain comin' in ... we'd buckets an' things all over the place ... it wis Doctor Shields told me tae get out it. He says, 'Its no' good for your health in here ... just after Ah hid Evelyn [1957] he told me tae get out. Back out tae Kelburn Terrace again and in wi' Nellie's father ... when Joyce [b.1958] wis eleven month old Ah took TB, an' that wis all workin' on me since Ah wis in Glasgow Road. An' it wasn't till Ah really got it on ma left side that they discovered that Ah did have it on ma right side, but it had healed up itself, y'know. An this was all workin' on me since Ah stayed in Glasgow Road[13]. (Josie Watson SA1998:12)

Of course, the Clune Park houses were not erected primarily to alleviate the already straining closes and lanes of the town centre, but to accommodate workers attracted to the area by the prospect of work in the booming wartime shipyards. Ironically, at the same time as some families in the town were coming to terms with losing out in the renovation of the Bay housing, the town was attracting new families to the industrial boom in the yards and new housing developments on the Glasgow Road. When reading of the 'necessary' inferior nature of this development, we would do well to remember that Admiralty Grants were calculated and awarded to build ships and not housing. This was a unique development indeed.

The Port approached the 1920s with a housing situation no better and possibly worse than that which they had before the First World War. Despite legislation brought forward in the

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[13] Josie spent a year in Bridge of Weir Hospital recovering from a severe TB infection.

1920s to further address the country's housing problem, the Port's situation deteriorated. By the 1930s the town's overcrowding and slum housing situation was recognised as among the worst in Scotland[14]. In 1931, when Rutherglen, Paisley and Greenock were suffering an overcrowding problem of 31%, 32% and 34% of their respective populations, the Port registered a staggering 42%, making it second only to Coatbridge at 45%[15]. This study considers a number of aspects of the lives of a group of Irish Catholic women living and working in the prevalent conditions in inter-war Port Glasgow.

[14] Figure 21 (cf. Appendix) provides us with a good indication of the layout of the Port for the period on which this study focuses.

[15] Cf. Census for Scotland 1931 Vol II

Chapter Two

THE WORKERS MUST BE FED

> When Ah think on it, a wuman had a helluva life then [1930s] ... she never got oot the door. You take a wuman wi' six o' a family goin' intae a room n'kitchen, an open fire tae cook on, tae clean and wash, a washhoose doon the back an' maybe it's rainin' when it's her turn an' she'd hiv tae dae it and then bring them [clothes] all back up the stairs wet, an we'd pullies in the room an' that's where all the wet claes got hung. Nae wonder a lot o' them had bad chests and things like that. That wuman never got oot. She wis cookin' six breakfast, dinners and teas, dae the cleanin' and then the men would just come in and get their pipe oot an' sit at the fire. They [men] never done anything like the young wans noo, they just sat and spit in the fire ... Aye, a helluva life, ye wonder how they managed tae rear a family. It wis aw left tae the mother
> (John Waddell 2001:009)

Was life in Port Glasgow in the early part of the twentieth century conditioning young women to the inevitability of marriage through accepted gender roles taught from a young age? If so, their experiences were not far removed in this respect from those of other working class Scottish women. Competency in the role of wife and mother was an essential skill for working class females and something that mothers would strive to instil in their children from an early age. Brides did not bring property with them, but they could bring the reputation of being from a good home, i.e. a home where a girl had had a steady family background and a thorough training from her mother in the innumerable necessary household skills. (Jamieson 1983:26-27)

2.1 Born Apprentices

Training in the ways of traditional female domestic chores in Scottish industrial communities began at an early age.

"In a Fife mining village ... a hewer's daughter needed to know all the ways of the

place: she was brought up by her mother to make herself absolutely subordinate to the needs of the men when they were in the house, yet to learn the crucial responsibility for running the budget on which the happiness and viability of the household ultimately rested." (MacIntyre 1980:138)

Of course, the experiences of a young woman in a Fife mining community cannot be compared exactly with those of a young Port woman. Mining communities could be more geographically remote, self-contained and close-knit. Nevertheless, legitimate parallels can be drawn on the basis of a shared general belief and commitment to traditional gender roles in these industrial communities, especially in relation to the female role of being subordinate to men and their traditional attachment to the home. Recent research on women's work has established that, within the family, women have continued to be economically dependant on men and have consistently been assigned the principal tasks of domestic labour (Yeandle 1984:1).

Working class girls grew up in the knowledge that theirs was to be a domestic role and it was integral to this role that, sooner rather than later, they would get married and begin a family of their own just as their mothers and grandmothers had before. And, of course, they would be expected to work at a 'real' job, too, i.e. one in which they would earn a wage. Certainly Port Glasgow's inter-war working class children were born into an apprenticeship for life as mothers or fathers to be, with all the necessary skills and cultural expectations these roles demanded.

2.1.1 The Female Experience

> Jesus, ma mammy had a big white table in the middle o' the fler in the hoose an' Ah scrubbed that table everyday, Christ, the erms wis scrubbed aff me, an everybody sat roon that big white table eatin' ... Aye, hid tae scrub it white. The

> kitchen wis ma job tae, we didn't even hiv linoleum on the kitchen, it wis bloody whitened like the stairs, cleaned the stone an' then whitened it. An' ye darenae staun' on it. If sombody stood on it they got the face took aff them ... aye, snow white like the stairs, it wis. (Emi Donnelly SA2001:011)

Like Emi, most girls grew up with their own specific household chores to complete.

> When Ah wis young Ah hid tae dae that close ... Ah done that wan week ... the next week wis the wuman next door's turn, well that week Ah wis left tae dae the windaas. Agnes always did the fireplace. Cissy done the scrubbin' o' the floors. We all had wir own wee part tae dae an' we had tae dae that before we'd a' got oot. If we were goin' tae a dance on a Friday we didn't hiv tae dae it, ma mother let us aff tae the Saturday. But, we had tae dae that. (Cassie Kane SA1997:22)

Cassie Kane's experience of having to forego either a Friday or Saturday night entertainment and meeting with friends to complete her household chores was not unique amongst her peers. Neither was it unusual to find that the girls of the family were required to deal with these heavier household tasks of cleaning stairs, windows, fireplaces and floors regardless of whether there were brothers in the family. Some tasks like fetching coal were usually carried out by boys, but girls spent longer hours in carrying out domestic tasks than boys, and they did the heavier tasks of cooking, washing and scrubbing floors (Jamieson 1986:52). In fact, compared to some mothers, Cassie's mother appeared rather sympathetic to Cassie's and her sisters' weekend dancing routine. If the work was missed on Friday it could be completed on Saturday. For others, the regime was less flexible and there was no leeway on when the tasks might be done. This task-setting was retained and passed on to the next generation as essential training for the female child, even when the girl was approaching courting age. Letti Lyons knew that Tuesday night was considered a traditional 'winching night' locally in the 1950s, but contrived to thwart her

daughters' courting ambitions in favour of assisting with some essential chores about the house just as she had been required to do.

> Ah'm talkin' aboot ma daughters, used tae keep them in on a Tuesday night. They had tae dae the carpets, take the rugs doon the stairs [to the back court] and beat hell oot them. They didnae get oot, naw they had tae stay in, they knew, they knew they had tae stay in ... oh, and they *had* tae! Agnes [daughter] wid tell ye that. (Letti Lyons SA2001:008)

Friday night appears to have been the most popular night for the big household cleaning action that meant for most female children that entertainment and pleasure-seeking had to be postponed.

> Oh aye, aye ... every Friday night that God sent we cleaned the whole house. Ye didn't have fitted carpets then, ye had wee fireside rugs that were taken doon the back and ye beat them till yer erms wir fallen aff. An' the chairs had tae be scrubbed, there wis nae polished chairs then, ye scrubbed the chairs an' ye scrubbed all the floors an' ye'd tae go roon' all this wi' a scrubbin' brush on yer knees ... Oh naw, ye didn't get oot, ye'd tae stay in. Oor Mary, God rest her, she wis the only wan that used tae jouk the work. She hated housework and she used tae leave it tae Maggie and me and Rinna, an' we aw hid oor ain jobs. Ma maw had things up on the mantlepiece, brasses and ye had tae brass them all ... aye ye done everything on a Friday night. (Bessie O'Neill SA2001:011)

It has to be said that it was not unknown for a determined daughter like Bessie O'Neill's sister Mary to escape the work. But her lack of domestic skills would occasionally show through when she was driven out of shame to perform household tasks. Things inevitably went wrong. On these occasions her siblings prided themselves on their superior skills and know-how in the domestic scene.

> Joe Martin stayed doon the stair and he had two big racin' dugs and oor Maisie [Mary], when she took a rid face, wid say 'Ah'll dae the stairs', an' she went oot wi' the bucket. An' she aye finished up wi' Mary Martin in her hoose learnin' her tae dance. An' wan night she went in an' she left the bucket in the lobby an' the dugs knocked it over an' it went all over the lobby and right up an' doon the lobby ... we used ae say 'its no' fair, it's no' fair', but ma maw wid say 'let her go, she's no' much o' a worker anyway. (Bessie O'Neill SA2001:011)

By far the most demanding item of household equipment to clean was the cooking range in the kitchen. This was obviously in constant use, as it served both as heating and as the cooking facility. It formed such a visible and distinctive part of the house that it was considered extremely important to keep it clean and presentable. It was an object of some devotion from a cleaning point of view, as it was often the subject of close scrutiny by neighbours and friends. The condition in which you kept your range was used as a measure of how well you looked after your house and performed your other domestic duties. It was the daughters' duty to carry out the massive cleaning operation to keep the range clean.

> A big range, an' it wis fur who could keep their range the nicest, black leedin' it, every Friday the range wis black leaded. It had a big steel fender, steel fender an' ye had tae scrub that wi' emery cloth tae take the stains of it an' then eventually it got better it was a surround ye had. But, in ma mother's day it wis a big steel fender an ye cleaned it wi' ashes ... an oul' bit o' cloth and ashes out the fire, coal ashes. An' then ye scoured it wi' this an' it wid be gleemin' like silver, the work ye pit in at it ... took ye hours, tae get it the way ye wanted it ... Oh ye took a pride in it. An' if ye were goin' tae fry anything ye covered it all up so the sparks o' grease widnae get ontae it 'cause it spoiled it. Ye covered it wi' paper or tin, they'd bits o' tin in them days, imitation tiles, an' ye pit them in along the back o' the range an' on the flat bit ye put paper under the gas ring tae cover as much o' the black leadin' as ye could so it widnae get marked. Everybody took a pride, well most people did, Ah did, took a pride in ma range ... Oh aye, ... bit o' jealousy aboot who had the nicest one. (Cassie Graham SA1990:114)

At least for some, the struggle to maintain a level of respectability was destined to be a constant one. The demands were sometimes set by individual mothers for the very worthwhile reason of trying to limit the amount of secondary level work that was demanded to keep some parts of the domestic environment clean. Thus, what seemed a sensible measure of protecting the range against the inevitable pollution caused by fry-ups became a standard to be followed in order to confidently show the range off to visitors.

But sometimes the apprenticeship was not simply served in one's own household. It was not unusual for children, having completed their duties in their own home, to learn more of their trade at the home of their neighbour who was incapacitated and could not perform all the household tasks that had to be done.

> Ah used tae go intae the wumin across the close an' Ah used tae go in an' scrub her floor. She used tae gie me sixpence for scrubbin' her floor. Ah used tae think this wis great, sixpence ... Ah wis thirteen or fourteen at the time. An' when she died she left me a rockin' chair. (Letti Lyons SA2001:008)

However, the training regime did not only consist of chores around the house. It was much more demanding and had a more piercing psychological point than simply teaching the art of good housekeeping. The question of how one behaved towards the man or men of the household was also a crucial part of the young woman's apprenticeship and in detailing specific chores to the female children the mother was "not only drawing on her paternal authority, but also respecting conventional notions about gender divisions" (Jamieson 1986:51).

Basically, the men were to be looked after, obeyed and put first as the provider or "breadwinner". Sarah Hagan cites this mentality as the predominant reason why some women made their own happiness and needs secondary to the demands and needs of a male relation and the pursuit of domestic harmony. When Sarah's grandfather died in the late 1920s, his son [Sarah's uncle], who was unmarried, met with difficult times. He lost the home that he had shared with his father when his rent arrears became too great, and he found it difficult to gain lodgings as he was unable to hold down a job. Sarah's father was dead by this time and Uncle Dan wanted Sarah's mother [his sister] to take him in. She was not disposed to take him in; however, reluctantly she agreed on the basis of a short-term stay. Thirty years later he was still living with her. Sarah regarded

her uncle as a man who was spoiled by always being looked after, first by his father and then by her mother. In this respect she saw him as no different from any other men of that time. Indeed, she believes it was simply the prevailing male dominant culture of the time that men, especially male relations, had to be looked after and protected at all costs, even if they were unreasonable people and difficult to live with. It simply was not in her mother's nature to put her own ego before her brother's needs and it was not the done thing for anyone to wash one's dirty linen in public. So Uncle Dan was tholed for thirty years. Of course, one could say that as a widow, Sarah's mother would be glad of the income he brought to the house, but his income was parish handouts. Sarah says that "he never worked. I think he worked one year in all that time." (Sarah Hagan SA2000:004). Rather than providing a financial cushion for the small family unit he lived with, Dan's unemployment put a strain on the family resources. Yet, his sister put up with this situation out of family loyalty and a belief, as far as Sarah is concerned, that his rights as a man extended that far.

> We grew up with him. He was very difficult, spoiled. And, my mum y'know ... at that time ye turned no talk on anybody, y'know. Oh, that was something, y'know what I mean. You daren't say a word even though they [offending person] were wrong, you didn't say anything about it. (Sarah Hagan SA2001:004)

The notion that men were the dominant gender in the Port as in other industrial towns was not hard to discern. Men were a privileged group. Certainly, Sarah Hagan gives this as the main reason why her mother put up with Dan's demands on the family's meagre resources.

> He got away with it you see, it was the times they lived in. ... Men were the rule of the roost y'know. I mean it was them that ruled the house ... (Sarah Hagan SA 2001:004)

It was not unusual for the rest of the family to do without, so that the men were able to eat something more substantial. This was especially true for those families that had a working father. Some of the jobs in the shipyards and other heavy industries around the town were physically very demanding if not damaging, and it was commonly understood that the imperative in relation to food rationing was that the workers were first in any food queue. This was often to the exclusion of children as well as the women, who had to make do with whatever could be acquired cheaply. It would be usual for the child to run the errand to buy whatever was affordable for the man/men, whilst asking for something cheaper and much less nutritious for themselves.

> Whitever wid a' happened, ma faither had tae get his tea when he came in from work. An' Ah can min' as well goin' roon tae Munro's the butchers and gettin' a quarter o' slice [sausage meat] an' a penny egg an' that wis tuppence ha'penny. That wis the tea for him. We'd [children] get a piece'n jam or ... we used tae take an oul' cup up tae the [shop] an' get a cup o' loose jam, loose jam! Like any kind o' jam, they'd a big jar and they jist scooped it oot intae a cup an' ye got so much ... a penny or tuppence. A couple o' pieces an' jam for ... [dinner]. (Letti Lyons SA2001:008)

Roberts makes the point that in her study area children were often sent to the shops to ask for credit because it was hoped that a child would exact more sympathy than an adult in this situation (Roberts 1985:15). It could be said that the same was true for those children sent to ask for two pence worth of jam for their dinner.

Certainly, for Letti and many of her peer group there was little ambiguity over what their role was in their family. Letti views the path her life took as a natural progression based on following the footsteps of her mother. Jamieson explains that there was no structured education trail followed by mothers and daughters. The idea that they would consciously set about advising their children for their respective gender roles in life was

not common; rather children were expected to learn the ropes from observing and copying their adult role models. "For most daughters, any knowledge of the management of money, as with housework, came form doing or observing rather than from advice about a future role of wife." (Jamieson 1986:55) The skills Letti learned as a child she tried to pass on to her own daughters by having them perform necessary domestic duties, not by consciously providing training for later life. Consequently, her estimation of those women who might have been less able to perform the tasks laid down for them by tradition is uncompromising.

> Aye, that's right. Anybody that cannae day these things is either stupit or they've never seen them done. Ye saw yer mother daein' them an' you done them. (Letti Lyons SA2001:008)

2.1.2 The Male Experience

Port boys grew up in the knowledge that theirs was a role outside the domestic scene. It could also be said that their strongest influence came not so much from performing traditional male chores, but from observing the ways of their adult counterparts. The traditions represented in the actions of the men of the family with regard to household chores and family responsibilities influenced them in their thinking about what was expected of them as men. Certainly, many women were in no doubt as to the apportioning of responsibility for domestic chores and family responsibility.

> Naw, naw ... it [housework] wis fur the wumen ... aw naw, the men didnae dae anythin' like that, men wouldn't even push a pram in case anybody would see them ... people would laugh at them. Noo the men will dae the messages, cookin' an' everythin'. Oor men never did a thing ... big John Gault, Paddy Martin an' all them, that crowd stood at the corner at the Cross, there wis a High Cross and a Low Cross ... an' aw the Irishmen stood there, Ah think that's where ma daddy stood. But, they wouldn't have taken a pram nor nothin' that wis oor work. If a

> man had gone shoppin' he would've been talked aboot, people wid have been laughin' at him "look at him ..." (Emi Donnelly SA2001:011)

The "arm's length" attitude of many fathers towards family and domestic chores in inter-war Port Glasgow served to affirm the cultural tradition of gender roles. Women and men recognised the segregation of chores and tasks along gender lines and expectations were cultivated accordingly, but this does not equate with acceptance or agreement between the parties about the just nature of the split. Cassie Graham certainly found that her struggle with the role she inherited as the mother and manager of the family frequently brought her into conflict with the expectations of her "breadwinner" husband.

> Big families, it wis the wumen that suffered, the men walked out. The men all stood at the corners in them days, corner boys. Did Ah no' tell ye about the corner boys. When there wis nae work the gangs o' boys, men, all stood at the corner, called them 'corner boys'. Never were in the house, and the women had the whole worry and the family an' all tae look after ...
> Many a row we had about money. ... Tell ye about the night ma man came in wi' a box o' chocolates for me, eftir drinkin' his [pay] money, a box o' chocolates, that wis ma wages ... Ah hev them at him, there wis chocolates from wan end o' the hoose tae the other. 'Is that ma wages?' oh, bang!, Ah hit him over the head wi' them an' there wis chocolates from wan ... An he turned roon tae the boys an' he says 'Look whit Ah'm gettin' for bringing her in chocolates!' Thought that wis fine. His idea wis 'Och, Cassie will manage' ... and so Ah did, wan way an' another Ah could get the things ...
> Know whit he told me wan time ... he says, 'You don't waant tae be the wumin o' the house ... you waant tae be the man an' wumin'. Ah says 'Aye, an' Ah've got tae be the man an' wumin, cause you'll take no responsibility, Ah've tae take it'. Ah'd tae take responsibilty for eveything. He couldn't a cared less Ah owed the national debt. He says tae me wan time, 'Its ma job tae work an' it's your job tae make it go round'. That's the notions they had in them days, the men. Didn't care whit ye owed, ye could go an' pay it whitever way ye like, wouldn't have given ye an extra copper tae help ye pay it. Very selfish the men in them days, took no responsibility. (Cassie Graham SA1990:115)

It is not difficult to imagine how young men in Port Glasgow gained the opinion that theirs was to be a life spent outside the domestic scene and distanced from the

traditional female concerns of domestic budgeting and family responsibility. Ayers and Lambertz argue that a situation like Cassie's was not an unusual one; that frequently the older men they interviewed on this matter made a virtue out of the fact that they handed over all financial responsibility to their wives with their wage packets. "They boasted that they never asked their wives what they did with the money and presented this as having provided women with power over the domestic domain ... the 'good wife' was to a large degree equated with the competent manager. Financial difficulties could therefore always be blamed on her poor skills and neglect of duties." (Ayers and Lambertz 1986:201)

Mothers added to the vitality of this traditional gender split by not apportioning household chores to their sons as well as their daughters.

> You see, my mother and not just my mother had to brush the men's boots, polish all their boots and do all that kind of thing. And all the heavy clothes they had to wash from the yards, they had to do all that. It was just ... it was the trend. If there was a girl in the house then she did all the work ... the boy in the house could come in from his work, get ready and walk out. The girl had to stay in, clean the stairs and help with the washing, do the dishes, do that kind of thing. No girl got away with not doing the tea dishes, but the son did. ... That was the way it was. (Sarah Hagan SA2001:004)

The first instinct of any boy returning home from school or work was to escape the domestic environment as quickly as possible.

> Ye were out, och, ye were out every night, soon as ye came in at night ye got waashed, well ye didn't shave at that time, or maybe only wance a month or somethin', an' ye got oot again as quick as ye could. (Paddy Collins SA1998:18)

However, the die had been cast long before their generation, and to make one's son do domestic chores might have been to risk their credibility among their peers and elders. Roberts found that, "while girls acted as their mother's apprentices or even substitutes, boys were more likely to be out of the house doing the shopping, helping with the

allotment or accompanying male members of the family on some expedition like walks, fishing trips or food gathering forays." (Roberts 1985:17).

> He [husband] took them up, every Sunday when they were boys, away up round the hills. He wis a great nature man. He wis a man that took a heavy drink ... but, he wis a good father and he took them up round the hills and showed them all the trees and the plants and up tae the Gryffe burn, whit they call guddlin' for fish ... his own and maybe two or three o' their pals, took the boys awae with him and the boys all loved him. (Cassie Graham 1990:114)

Even adult males who found themselves facing the dilemma of having to do women's chores went to extraordinary lengths to avoid detection and considered their reputation soiled if caught in the act.

> Ah min' o' the Lindsays next door, an' here the oul' mother died an' it wis left tae the two fellas, two men, an' here they didn't like tae ask anybody if they would dae the stairs, although oor Katie widda done it fur them. Know whit they done, they came oot at twelve o' clock at night wi' bratties on, aprons, and they went an' swept the first landin' an there wis two or three young wans comin' from the dancin' an' they happened tae look up, an they said 'Oh my God, there two men daein the stairs' (laughter), an' it seems they lifted up their bratties and run up the stairs. (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1997:16)

For boys the expectation was an apprenticeship for life as a "breadwinner". But where family circumstances determined that everyone had to contribute, boys as well as girls were assigned tasks to aid the commonweal of the family. Paddy Collins was only eight years old when both his father and his grandfather died in 1920, but soon, along with his ten year old brother, he became aware of the responsibilities they were expected to take as the male members of the family. Paddy's mother was unable to support her family alone and took the boys to live with her widowed mother. As a result the granny became the dominant member of their particular domestic environment.

Granny Burns is remembered as a hardworking woman who marshalled the family into action and underpinned their survival without the financial assistance of an adult

male wage coming into the home. Her business ventures included the purveying of foods from a disused railway wagon that she sited on a piece of vacant land close to the family home at the bottom of Montgomery Street. The land, which she had the permission of the local council to use, sustained a small vegetable plot and the produce was sold. She also kept goats and hens and she allowed travellers to tether their ponies to her railings for a fee. All this was managed on top of dealing with a sometimes difficult lodger to whom she rented her room as part of her strategy for making ends meet. Paddy's sister Cassie recalls that Granny Burns was noted not only for her hardworking nature but her hard character too.

> And she could fight like a man. Battered them left, right an' centre ... two or three times that oul' Dan Meechan [lodger] would come in an' he'd be drunk an' y'know ... shoutin' an bawlin', an' she wid pin him against the wall an' anialate [annihilate] him, then she'd shove him intae the room tae his bed. Aye, she could use hersel' an' she never let anybody awae wi' much, that wis wan thing. Ah always remember ma mother tellin' me, Ah don't know whether it wis oul' Dan she wis fightin' wae, but she wis fightin' some man anyway, an' somebody said tae ma granda, 'You should go oot there Peter, he's hittin her', an' he says, 'Ah don't need tae go oot there she can haud her own, if Ah go oot there she'll mibe batter me n'all.' She could haud her own wae anybody ... they didn't come back for any more anyway. (Cassie Kane SA1997:22)

It was Granny Burns who apprenticed Paddy and his brother Neil to the breadwinner role. Before they left school she had provided them with the means of earning a living.

> [Granny] used tae go tae the market every Wednesday, Ah used tae go along wi' her ... the time she bought the pony Ah wis wi' her, up at the Glasgow cattle market. She says, 'Ah'm gonnie buy that pony', ... it wis a roan pony ... Ah walked from the cattle market doon tae the Port wi' that pony, that's twenty-one miles, an' Ah wis only twelve year old. She came home on the train. Ah tried tae get on the pony at Renfrew an' it widnae hiv me, just threw me aff. ... we used it tae sell coal, bricketts, firewud ... we would go tae Bishopton and awae doon the length o' the Erskine Ferry and there were very, very few houses on that road then ... ma grannie took tae dae wi' [money]. We got pocket money. (Paddy Collins SA1997.25)

Consequently, Paddy was influenced in his younger years by this situation which

brought perhaps more than the usual measure of expectation to bear on his young shoulders and those of his brother Neil. With no father around, even allowing for the strong and resourceful grandmother, any possible danger to the safety of the young men in the family was taken very seriously indeed. They could not afford to lose either their present or their potential earning power.

> That wis wan thing. Neillie and Paddy used tae go oot an' they went wae a kinna rough crowd and she used tae say tae them, 'Now listen, you've got no father, if you get intae trouble they'll take you awae ... an leave us in a right pickle' ... an' they never ever ... never in their life wis the polis ever at ma mother's door. (Cassie Kane SA1997:23)

2.2 From School to Household Management

In Britain in the 1930s around 3500 mothers died in childbirth every year. The risk of a woman dying in childbirth was as high in the 1930s as it had been in the mid nineteenth century (Humphries & Gordon 1993:8). The annual reports of the Department of Health demonstrate the scale of the maternal mortality problem for Scottish health authorities in the1930s.

Maternal Mortality

Year	deaths	per 1000
1931	544	5.9
1934	549	6.2
1937	423	4.8

Table 7[1]

This table indicates that in the six year period between 1931 and 1937 the average maternal mortality rate across Scotland was 5.6 deaths per 1000.

[1] Annual Report Department of Health 1931, 1934, 1937

For some girls, maturity came very quickly when circumstances forced them to become the substitute mother to the family for it is recognized that, whilst some domestic chores may have been shared by boys and girls, the task of full time domestic management was very definitely a female one. "If the mother died a woman would be expected to take her role [but] only daughters left school early to become full time housekeepers." (Jamieson 1986:54) Often the eldest daughter found herself propelled into the job of substitute housewife and mother to her family.

> Well ma mother died [of tuberculosis] when Ah was only fourteen years of age an' ma daddie got permission to take me out of school to look after the house. He was workin' in the shipyards and couldn't afford to lose the job. He needed somebody to look after the family an' Ah was the oldest of the weans. (Cathie Hagan SA1998:18)

Those families that had a daughter able to take over the running of the home at such difficult times may have been considered lucky. But it was often the case that a daughter, already having left school and embarked upon a good job in the town, was compelled to give it up to look after the family. Josie Watson was employed in the Co-operative Society shop in the town when her mother died. She had to abandon her job there to look after her two brothers, a lodger and her father, who only stayed at home intermittently as he went to Ireland to seek work after his wife's death.

> Ah had left school an' Ah wis workin' in the Cooperative at the time ... so Ah had tae leave the Cooperative 'cause Ah couldnie work and look after the house all at the wan time ... cause ye had a wash house, ye'd tae take all yer washin' doon tae the back court an' dae all yer washin' in the wash house, ye'd the stairs tae clean ... ye'd tae lift the carpets an' take them oot an' beat them at the back. Ye'd no hoovers n'all that in them days, it wis all hard work. Black lead all the grate ... When Ah got up in the mornin' Ah'd see John and Hugo aff tae school wi' their breakfast. Ma father wis over in Ireland workin' at the time. Then Ah wid start makin the beds ... the lodger wid aye say 'Who the hell made this bed, it's like the Mountains o' Mourne'. Cause in them days it wis no' like the mattress ye've got now, it wis jist like flock that wis in it and ye had tae pull it out and throw it onto the bed an' ye had a big stick an' ye battered it doon again

> ... but, Ah never battered it doon enough and he said it wis like the Mountains o' Mourne. Then Ah'd tidy up the hoose and wash the floors and go shoppin' ... usually Thursday and Friday were the main days for daein' that. Ye'd tae dae yer windas, beat the carpets, wash the floors, get the carpets in, and polish all around the carpets ... there wis linoleum on the floor and ye'd tae polish all that around the carpets. (Josie Watson SA1997:26)

As with any job, there was a learning curve to be followed by Josie in her early days as a full-time stand-in mother to her family and landlady to the lodger. The lodger had the occasion at least once to suffer at the hands of Josie's determination to make a good job of the role she had inherited from her mother.

> We had a kinna runner carpet that ran from the bedroom door up tae the winda near enough ... Ah forgot an' Ah went ahead an Ah washed the floor and Ah polished the whole thing an' then Ah put the carpet doon again, an' the lodger came in an' stood on it ... Ah cannie say whit he said on that tape ... he slipped on it and went whoosh, right up the room. Ye should have heard him, cause he wis Irish an' he could swear. (Josie Watson SA1997:26)

2.3 Employment and the Road to Marriage

2.3.1 Mill Lassies

Women in the inter-war period (and beyond) in Port Glasgow did not have a wide number of options open to them regarding their future. Having left school, in some cases early, many faced a period in the Gourock Ropework, known locally as Birkmyre's Mill. The substantial proportion of the female workforce employed at any time in the mill verifies this. The decennial census for 1931 describes the textile industry as the largest employer of female labour in Scotland next to personnel and commercial occupations. Relating this to the local experience, there were 8782 female textile workers recorded for Renfrewshire, and 1064 of these for Port Glasgow. If we assume that the largest proportion of this textile workforce in the Port came from the

15-34 age bracket (accepting, of course, that there would be a number of older female textile workers), which totalled 3132, we can say that approximately 30% of Port women between 15 and 34 were employed in Birkmyre's Mill in 1931 (Census 1931, Vol. III:161).

Marriage offered a means of escape from the prospect of life tied to a heavy, dirty job (cf. Appendix Figure 23).

C.K.: Ah wis too damn gled tae get oot o' it.

H.H.: Was it a helluva place tae work?

C.K.: Och, it was ... it wasn't the work ... it wis that dirty, it wis really awfa awfa dirty an' ye were swaallyin' all this dirt ye know ... Ah wis a spinner ... an', well, ye got all the dirt comin' aff the big reels. (Cassie Kane SA1997:23)

Cassie was married at the age of seventeen. But even then she had already spent three years working as a spinner in the Mill and had had enough of its demanding regime and filthy work. Three years in such an occupation was considered by Cassie to be too long. As expected, her marriage to Neillie Kane, a carter with the Cooperative, brought a swift end to her spinning days in the Mill.

H.H.: They [Mill managers] didn't encourage ye tae work when ye got married?

C.K.: Aye, they didn't like it right enough but Ah could've stayed on. He [the foreman] did come up n' tell me. He says, 'Eh, you're gettin yer books on Friday night'. Ah says, 'Well that's awright'. Ah thought it wis because Ah wis gettin' married that Ah wis gonnie get the books. Anyway, when Ah got wir hoose in Ashgrove Lane, the oul gaffer came doon Ashgrove Lane wan day an' Ah wis washin ma windas an 'e says tae me, 'Oh, ye're livin' here!' an Ah says 'Aye', he says, 'Wid ye no' go back intae the Mill?' Ah says 'Aye, Ah wid go back intae the Mill'. He says, 'Y'know you would never've got yer books but we were told you were expectin' ...' Ah says, 'Well, Ah'm eight years merried ... an Ah've nae family yit! Ah think it wis me gettin' married so young they must've thought Ah wis expectin'. (Cassie Kane SA1997:23)

Cassie's experience would not have been out of line with the experience of many other women. Being sacked as a result of getting married was a common occurrence. Dismissal followed on the grounds that the woman would soon become pregnant; she would then be a liability in the workplace and a less efficient worker.

Women performing mundane or less skilled tasks could be easily replaced. The more skilled female workers had a stronger case for retention beyond marriage, but there was no negotiation over the matter (cf. Appendix Figure 24). Weavers and spinners were relatively skilled, and while they were subject to the same general rules as other workers, their skill brought them advantages. Higher wages was the most obvious benefit, but a more favourable relationship with management also existed.

A weaver getting married would also be frowned upon, but she might not exact a swift dismissal. Weaving was considered a skilled trade and some training time - although not much - had gone into this individual. Their immediate loss could affect production, especially if the person was good at their job, and the prospect of recruiting and training another woman would militate against instant dismissal. However, once a female worker was married she encountered the closest scrutiny because the assumption was that pregnancy would soon follow.

M.O'D.: We had a gaffer, Charlie Stewart, ... he wid get ontae them if emdy, even a married woman, wis with ... sometime they wir with [child] but they needed the money. Y'know, they were still in daein' the weavin. An' they [gaffers] wid go tae another loom an' say, 'Eh so n' so, dae ye think there's somethin there?' Ye see the time was ... that people needed the money.

H.H.: Was Charlie sideling up tae try and find out who was pregnant?

M.O'D.: Aye, tryin tae find out ye see because he wis the foreman.

H.H.: What would he want to know for?

M.O'D.: Well because they would get ontae him up in the office ye see ... they're no supposed tae ... work like that [pregnant].
H.H.: What happened then, did ye loss yer job?

M.O'D.: Oh, they wid hiv tae leave because in a way ... they [management] weren't gonnie be responsible, what if they [worker] fell at the loom?
(Margaret O'Donoghue SA1997:20)

Although for most young women the objective was to get out of the Mill as quickly as possible, for others keeping their job at all costs was crucial. Women suffering under terrible poverty at home would go to great lengths to remain in work. The woman was often the sole earner in the household and disguising pregnancy was a common way of trying to remain in employment until the last possible moment. But, not all of those who were charged with looking out for pregnant workers were keen to approach them with the news they were trying so hard to avoid.

> When Ah wis a gaffer in the Mill Ah hid tae watch for that [pregnant women]. It wis the manager that pit me ontae it 'cause Ah wisnae thinkin'. He says tae me wan time, 'Dae you know wan o' your girls is pregnant?' ... He says, 'You better go an' tell her she's finished.' Ah says, 'Ah'll send her intae the office an' you can tell her.' So Ah sent her in an' he tellt her an' she got so long before she got bagged. (Jim Pettigrew SA2001:009)

Even though mill work was loathed, many women found themselves drawn back into its clutches once their children had been born, to assist with the upkeep of the house, provide for the family in times of male unemployment and to assist with the extra provisions required following the addition to the family.

> Och aye, thir were plenty went back intae the Mill eftir they'd hid their family. (Cassie Kane SA1997:25)

Having fulfilled the rite of passage into adulthood through marriage, childbirth and the acquisition and management of the family home, the prospect of returning to

work in the Mill was not quite as daunting. This was mainly because married women felt they did not have to contemplate a lifetime of work in there. However, ironically, although women viewed marriage as a means of release from the wage-labour struggle of paid employment, their family circumstances of regular male unemployment and a growing number of children to feed, often saw them returning in numbers to work in Birkmyres Mill to sustain the household.

Port Glasgow 1931

Number of married women	Number of married women employed	Married women employed as Textile workers	Married women textile workers as % of total employed
3389	**220**	**138**	**63**

Table 8[2]

The census figures tell us that only 6.5 per cent of married women worked in Birkmyre's Mill in 1931, but interestingly, of those married women who did work 63% of them worked in the textile industry. 1064 women worked in Birkmyre's Mill in 1931[3], which means that almost 21% of the female workforce was married. We can, of course, assume that these women were not newlyweds as the common experience was of losing employment as a result of marriage. Therefore, these were women who were returning to work having been married some time and presumably having had a child or children who were placing financial demands on the family budget.

It would certainly seem as though there was no desire on the part of women to spend their lives working in the mills and textile factories in inter-war Britain. The

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[2] Census 1931, Vol. III, p.161
[3] Cf. p.81 above.

women who entered the textile mills in Fife in the inter-war period were certainly found to harbour no doubts about the loathing they had for the mill work they had to perform and about the eagerness they felt about leaving it behind as soon as possible (Smyth 1990:97). Roberts regards work after marriage as having negative connotations for women in the inter-war period and claims that women worked after marriage out of financial necessity and not in pursuit of personal freedom or liberation (Roberts 1988:72-73). Seeing the grey areas that existed for women in this period in relation to their role as worker, domestic manager, wife and mother, Leonore Davidoff and Belinda Westover introduced an oral history on women's work by describing how women "did not experience their lives in compartments of home, work and leisure but mesh employment with domestic commitments. In this way their work fits around their lives, unlike the pattern regarded as normal because it applies to men." (Davidoff and Westover 1986:x)

2.3.2 Children's Earnings: Training or Tradition ?

Of course, it is also true that the household budget benefited from the income generated by children and it was often more than chance that children earned a wage with which to assist the family income. Child labour was a serious method of making ends meet for many families. Even today legislators continue to debate the thorny issue of child labour and whether or not teenagers delivering milk are being exploited or are gaining useful training and transferable skills for the 'real' job market. In the inter-war period in Port Glasgow the money that could be earned by children running errands or doing chores for neighbours or myriad other occupations was essential to

the well-being of the family. The debate for social historians is whether parents depended on their children as a source of income and made demands on them to hand in their wages or the children were following tradition and a principled convention that said they would aid the family as and when possible. Ellen Ross argues that children's earning were not handed up to their mother out of some "grim sense of duty", rather she claims that children, who fully understood the harsh economic realities of life for their parents, took "pride in assuming a mark of adulthood, the expectation of more spending money and privileges within the household, and a deep desire to help mother motivated young people to contribute most of their first earnings without complaint." (Ross 1986:87) Certainly, as children turned into working adults many mothers relied upon them for a financial contribution to the household budget and the fact that sons could earn more than their female siblings made it more difficult to accept a son's decision to go and seek work outside the area, especially if he was the only son in a family of six children.

> Oh ma mother didn't want me to go, because Ah hid five sisters and Ah wis the only wan earnin' an' ma mother wis takin' it bad. But, ma father wis glad 'cause he thought Ah wis gettin' nowhere, ye see Ah wis idle a couple o' times when Ah wis servin' ma time during the depression ye know, in the thirties. An' he wis quite happy because he knew Ah wid be earnin'. (John Brown SA2001:007)

Despite promises to send money home, John's mother saw the physical distance that was about to come between them as a threat to her control over this particular source of income. With school children the earning capacity was obviously less, but it was nevertheless needed in many cases. Opinion differs on whether an economic or moral dynamic was in force here. Whilst some children undoubtedly handed over earnings out of respect and tradition for the family based upon the "moral and ethical

climate" (Roberts 1984:42), it is also argued that their was a "generational economic calculus" causing children to forego personal earnings to support their younger siblings and parents (Meacham 1977:156). Certainly, Port Glasgow's young female Mill workers in the 1930s never doubted that their earnings would be a contribution to the household and that their mother would determine the share they would retain. We cannot underestimate their experience as child labourers in preparing them for this situation.

> When Ah started in the Mill Ah got ten shillin' and thrupence, some people only got eight shillin's, but ma flat got ten shillin's, and that wis the basic wage. When ye came tae sixteen that went up tae ten and nine. An' ye could work overtime ... if ye worked an hour every night at the end o' the week ye had an extra wan an' thrupence in yer pay. Aye, five thrupences, thrupence a night ye got ... Ah got a shillin' oot ma pay, ma ten shillins and ninepence. But, while Ah wis at school Ah went messages for a woman that worked ... oor family always seemed tae go her messages, ma sister before me went messages for her mother ... an she gave me a shillin' every week for goin' the messages ... an Ah handed that shillin' in tae the house as if it wis a pay Ah wis handin' in (Agnes Mulholland SA2001:002)

2.3.3 Women's Wartime Work

Traditionally women's work was of a lesser value than men's work and this axiom managed to survive two world wars in which the female contribution to industry and the war effort was massive. Without doubt the two World Wars of the twentieth century had a profound effect on woman's work and more importantly on women's attitudes to work. The socio-economic and political arena for women was different at both junctures and opinion is split on which period saw the largest shifts in opinion. However, it is true that the mood for change in government circles was greater after World War II than after the 1914-1918 War (McIvor 1992:157).

Nevertheless, the First World War was an emancipating experience and

consciousness raising episode for the large numbers of Scottish working class women who flooded into the munitions factories, the railways, the trams and other jobs replacing male labour drawn into the forces (McIvor 1992:144). The appearance of large numbers of women in the traditionally male work environment can easily be described as a 'flood', as the statistics for the numbers of men leaving the labour force to enlist indicate. It is estimated that in the eighteen months following the outbreak of hostilities in 1914, 29.4% of the British workforce had volunteered to enlist; Scotland lost the equivalent of 46.8% of the male workforce as calculated in 1911. It was imperative that the shipyards and engineering works and munitions factories were kept running at maximum production. The 'reserve army' of female workers was called upon to maintain production. They had a particularly marked effect upon the shipbuilding and marine engineering industry on the Clyde, which represented 90% of Scotland's shipbuilding capacity at the onset of hostilities (Lee 1999:12).

In terms of contentious aspects of wartime female employment, the most disconcerting for the trade union movement was the fear ignited by dilution, the filling of skilled posts by unskilled of semi-skilled, mostly female, labour. The unions feared that this situation would be difficult to reverse once the War was over and would leave them in a very weak position with employers. Consequently, they petitioned the government to gain assurances that this would not be allowed to happen. The result was the Treasury Agreement and Munitions Act 1915, which guaranteed that the displacement of wartime female labour would be complete as soon after the cessation of hostilities as possible. Therefore, the advances in women's employment opportunities during World War I, which saw membership of the National Federation of Women

Workers increase from 10,000 to 50,000 and the female membership of the National Federation of General Workers reach 60,000 (Lee 1999:24), were quickly reversed once peace was established.

The role of women in heavy industry was precipitated by the extraordinary circumstances of the Great War, and the unions and the Government were in no doubt that this position should be temporary for as long as circumstances required them to aid the War effort. Nevertheless, we must not assume that women were passive bystanders in this debate over their worth and position in industrial society. If they were struggling to advance their case industrially, they were having better effect politically. Their success in forcing a widening of the franchise in 1918 was advanced ten years later by an equalling of the franchise with men. However, there was a school of thought that said that women were a disruptive force in those industrial workplaces where men had been traditionally in control. The delegates to the Scottish Trade Union Congress in 1918 voted down a motion to argue for equality of competition between males and females in all sectors of employment, Charles Robinson of Motherwell Trades Council claimed (STUC AR 1999:83-86) that the involvement of women in industry during the War had a demoralising effect upon men and a depressing effect upon public morality, and that the woman's natural sphere was in the home.

In their own memories of wartime employment, women describe feelings of strain and hardship, camaraderie and companionship, freedom and pride. They experienced what Gail Braybon describes as "a new sense of self worth" (Braybon 1987:131). Certainly their experience in the traditionally male workplace was short lived. However, when women entered the shipyards of Port Glasgow and other Clydeside towns during

the Great War, they were experiencing work under a different kind of industrial employer and they left these places with new experience and new attitudes towards their situation. These ideas and attitudes did not end with their tasks assisting the war effort. They lived on in them and in their offspring and changed their attitude to the general economic and political situation. Port women were regularly to be found at the forefront of demonstrations in the town during the lean years of the Hungry Thirties. It is not without foundation to suggest that the female experience in the male industrial environment hardened their attitudes towards employers and local politicians.

> The women and their weans used tae all follow the band, they'd a band, the Yumps, and they always had public speakers over at the monument (War Memorial). They knew all their facts and they could tell you what the Royal family wis getting' ... and the Provost. The polis could've killed them. This night we had a meetin' and we all followed on wumen and weans, men n'all... we're all chantin' "We want bread, we want bread" at the pitch o' their voices and it wis getting out o' order. The polis charged them. We'd tae run for wir lives ... but they wurn't frightened, they fought well. There were riots another night and they broke all the shop windaes, men and women, broke all the shop windaes ... lootin' ... they were gonnie take everythin' home, women n'all ... it wis hectic ... jam, the jam wis runnin' doon John Wood Street oot the shop windaes, probably killin' wan another tae get at it, y'know. (Cassie Graham SA1998:10)

Of course, poverty in the 1930s made life very difficult and it was this that brought the women and men of the town onto the streets and not any politicisation of the women that might have taken place as a result of their venture into the world of men's work during the First War.

Capital investment industries like shipbuilding and engineering were badly affected by the economic slump in the 1930s and Port Glasgow suffered much higher levels of male unemployment than many other industrial centres in Scotland.

Male Unemployment 1931

	Males 14 ys. and over*	out of work	percentage
Scotland	1,542,253	283,398	18.4
Port Glasgow	**6,323**	**3,908**	**61.8**
Greenock	25,607	9,514	37.2
Coatbridge	14,268	3,805	26.7
Paisley	27,153	6,030	22.2
Motherwell and Wishaw	21,460	5,471	25.5
Glasgow	353,757	94,262	26.6

*gainfully employed

Table 9[4]

Nevertheless, if the Second World War introduced a new breed of women workers into the industrial scene, they were certainly the better educated and more politically experienced offspring of the 1914-1918 female pioneers of war work. Their attitude to their socio-economic state would have been tempered by the experience of those who had gone before them. Richard Croucher maintains that women in Scotland's industries in this period were markedly more militant than their male counterparts. He cites the strike action of the women in the Rolls Royce factory in Hillington, among others, as a major confrontation (Croucher 1979:8). We have the testimony (Hutchison and O'Neill 1989:69) of female workers involved in traditionally male jobs during the Second World War to indicate that many of the mysterious notions about men's work had been swept away or were in the process of being swept away by this time.

Certainly, it was the experience of some of those women in the shipbuilding industry in Port Glasgow during World War Two that they were able to perform these tasks as well as any man might do. Some also recall how their experience of dealing with the

[4] Census for Scotland 1931: x, 42, 50, 52.

men who remained in the yards left an indelible mark upon them.

> Ah started in the shipyard in 1942 driving a crane lifting different things for platers ... he (crane driver) did some training for six or seven weeks, showed me how tae drive it and work the levers then he went aff his work sick an' that wis me on it till Ah left tae hiv ma Ann (daughter). Eftir that Ah went out and worked in Lamont's wi' the painters ... Ah went back tae Hamilton's yard tae ma oul' job. All in all Ah hid aboot three years in the yards. Aye, the men, they treated me an' Ah treated them the same way ... *word for word.* Oh aye, Ah hid wan troublemaker, a wee man called Adams an' he wis a terrible curser. Anyway, wan day Ah gave him as good as he gave me an' he wis gonnie hit me ... he wis effin and blindin' at me ... Ah says, ' See if you don't stop, see this link [shackle] Ah'm gonnie throw it you' And he says 'You throw that an' Ah'll bash your face in'. So, Ah went like that (lunged) an' Ah just scuffed him on the face. He screamed 'Ya fuckin' bee ye, ye wid dae it n'all' Ah says 'Aye, Ah would, an' Ah'll dae it again tae. If you dae that tae me again [swearing] Ah'll throw this at ye'. Jesus, Ah would have killed him if Ah'd really hit him wae it. Ah'd o' been up for murder. It wis a big steel link for hingin' a job on, but Ah jist scuffed the side o' his heid wae it. Ah'd maybe put some brains intae him if Ah had really hit him. That's where Ah learned ma cursin'. (Cassie Kane SA1997:25)

The pressure to perform well at the job was very real. Many men remained in these reserved occupations and many were scathing about the ability of women to perform these traditional tasks properly. Hence, women like Cassie were forced to assert themselves physically if needs be, to silence the taunts of their male counterparts in the yards. The fears held by skilled journeymen about female workers in the shipyards were capable of being translated into the sort of policy at union level that ensured women would be removed from the male work environment, as happened after the First War.

However, employers and government changed their stance from the previous post-war period to entertain the merits of female workers maintaining jobs in the industrial sector post 1945 to plug the expected shortfall in labour demand and to further their political aims. McIvor (1992:157) claims that the Second World War,

therefore, marked a significant watershed in the relationship of women to waged work, claiming that many women maintained their wartime jobs in the formal economy after World War Two. This, he says, was down to the government's political commitment to full employment, which meant that unlike the twenties and the thirties the thirty years to 1970 witnessed a constantly maintained demand for female labour. There are some women who experienced being retained in their wartime place of employment once peace had been secured.

> Ah worked for four years during the war out in the goods station doing a man's job ... the men were all awae at the war an Ah wis there almost the whole war an' another three women wi' me ... an after the war the men had tae get their jobs back, they needed their jobs. So, they sacked three women. Ah got kept on, Ah wis always a good worker. They kept me on as a cleaner in the office and Ah wis there for twenty years. (Cassie Graham SA1990:14)

However, Cassie was not allowed to retain her job loading and unloading goods wagons. That was male work and unionised work and would attract better wages than any working class woman might hope to earn at this time. The notion of the family wage based upon the male breadwinner was current and the idea that women would do men's work and draw a man's wage for doing so would have been unacceptable to unions, employers and government[5]. Other women would have had a similar experience to Cassie's of being retained in the company's employ, but in a job of lesser status than that which she had performed for the War effort.

Other scholars believe that the Second World War was not the watershed in terms of women's work that it might sometimes be considered and that the experience of Cassie Graham was common. Boston notes that the Restoration of Pre-War Practices Act, 1942 was designed to placate the trade unions that were concerned about dilution and

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[5] For further information cf. McIvor (1992) and Boston (1980).

was important in ensuring that women returned to their homes or to unskilled work after the War. She points out that even though the Government was faced with the expected shortfall in the labour market, they proceeded to close down nurseries, denied women equal pay and opportunities and retained restrictive practices, thereby compounding the difficulties faced by women. The social security system was, she says, based on the family, with the male as breadwinner, which saw a rapid return to the status quo ante in both post war periods (Boston 1980:219-220).

2.4 Marriage: Freedom or the Quest for Personal Space?

As I passed Birkmyre's Mill,
ma heart began to fret.
Tae think o' all the bonnie wee molls,
up in the Yankee flat.

Ah'll dust her dirty petticoat.
Ah'll dust her dirty shawl.
An' Ah'll wed ma wee mill hairy,
in the Cooperative Hall .
(Margaret O'Donoghue SA1997:17)

For those young women who worked in the Mill, the prospect of marriage gave an important message to those they worked with that they could escape its clutches. The consequences for those women who did not marry were obvious as far as the mill girls were concerned.

> Oh ... if ye never got married an' ye worked in the Mill ye couldn't ... Ah mean the kinna good jobs were hard tae get unless ye had an education. If ye were a teacher or a lawyer or ye had an education, but if ye worked in the Mill an' that wis yer job ye couldn't dae nothin' else but that ... an' say ye came tae be 50 or over 50 or even 60 ye were still workin' in that mill 'cause even the money ... nowadays people's better done for as regards livin' on their own. (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1997:20)

Among Port women there was an element of peer pressure concerning marriage, i.e. a fear of what being "left on the shelf" said about you as a woman and more importantly, the fear of what others would say. This was a pressure that claimed marriage brought security and personal status. To be unsuccessful in gaining a husband was to be unsuccessful in life. We can rightly view people's understanding of marriage in the inter-war period as a collection of obligations that had their foundation in economic and social security and which had specific meaning to the partners involved, especially the woman. Ellen Ross tells us that the marriage contract "did not enjoin romantic love or verbal or sexual intimacy, but required financial obligations, services and activities that were gender specific" (Ross 1982:578). Marriage was important as an outward sign of a woman's ability to fulfil society's expectations. So, why not get married sooner rather than later?

Certainly, in the case of those young women who were running households and serving the men of the house, whether family or lodgers, from fourteen years of age and less, marriage was considered as a step towards a new form of security and towards freedom. As Margaret O'Donoghue claims, the prospect of a lifetime in Birkmyre's mill was enough to instil the notion of marriage into young girls:

> A helluva lot, Ah don't know about now, but years and years ago, they were scared stiff they were gonnie be left an oul maid. Ah mine a wee lassie came intae the weavin an' somdy pointed oot tae her an oul oul wuman ... she never wis married. She [the lassie] says, 'See her up there how long has she been in here?' An' somdy says, 'She's been in here for therty year.' An' this wee lassie says, 'Whit! Ah'm bloody sure Ah'll no be in it therty year ... an' she went an' she got married at eighteen. (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1997:17)

Roberts reminds us that in her research she found no young unmarried people who left home to set up independently and for the unmarried young person at home there

was little moral independence. She explains that the majority continued to live by their parents rules and conditions which they internalised as their own (Roberts 1985:27). Emphasising the importance of marriage to freedom and independence from the parental home, Gittens (1986:250) tells us that

> Women's patterns of dependency have been mediated, above all by marital status and that the single woman who lived parent(s) owed her primary allegiance to, and was by law dependent on, her father (or mother, or brother, or uncle, depending on circumstances) and the dictates of that family household. Her work might involve caring for kin within or outside of the parental household. She might be engaged in wage labour full-time or part-time, or might work for a member of the family in their workshop or business for no wage at all ... whether and what sort of work she was involved in was determined and decided almost invariably by her father, or other relative who was head of the household.

She goes on to say that "marriage shifted a woman's primary allegiance from her father to her husband and the needs of his/their family household" (Gittens 1986:250). This, of course, did not mean personal freedom and independence, but it did precipitate a certain ability to make one's own decisions and mistakes.

This is not to suggest that women were using marriage as a way of relinquishing family commitments. Indeed, some married women in Port Glasgow continued to be a substitute mother to the paternal home while attending to her new responsibilities as wife and mother to her own husband and family (cf. Appendix Figure 22).

> Well, in an unfortunate way Ah still had ma father and ma brothers. So, Ah was from Glasgow Road [west end of town] into John Wood Street [town centre] nearly every day doing their housework, make their food and then back out to my own house and doing my own [work] ... It was hard work. Ah ended up no' well with it right enough ... Ah took TB. And Ah was in the hospital with it. The kids were a year up in Quarrier Homes, Bridge of Weir [residential care unit]. (Josie Watson, Time Quines Transcript 1/v p. 15)

2.4.1 Living Space

As Roberts (1984:176) found in her study, in the inter-war period, married life often began for the newly weds by sharing the limited space available in the bride's family home. Where this form of family assistance was not required and the couple were able to find a home of their own, even in the form of a cramped rented room in someone else's house, a sense of freedom was obtained.

The feeling of independence which could follow marriage came largely from the fact that it gave a young woman, more so than a man, her own space, something which in most households in Port Glasgow was at a premium.

> We were four in a bed in ma mother's house ... terrible. Ye waanted married tae get a place of your own. (Cassie Graham SA1998:10)

Statistical evidence shows that housing and overcrowding was still a major concern for the local authorities in Scotland and for Port Glasgow in particular, in the 1930s. The Report of the Department of Health for Scotland, 1935, refers to the 1931 census returns as "a substantially true index of the dreadful overcrowding conditions in Scotland in 1934" (Cm 4837, 1934:24). What had to be done to improve the overcrowding situation in Scotland was easily highlighted by a comparison with the situation in contemporary England.

- 1,638,786 persons, or over a third (35%) of the population of Scotland, were living more than two to a room. This was practically six times the proportion in England.
- 697,469 persons, or more than one seventh of the population were living more than three persons to room. This was ten times the proportion in England.
- Nearly one half of the 1,146,852 houses in Scotland were of one and two apartments. In England less than 5% of the houses were of this size.
- Over four fifths of the overcrowding (more than 2 persons per room) occurred in houses of one and two apartments.

The statistics for Port Glasgow for 1931 show that, whilst there was a small increase in standards and conditions from the previous census of 1921, the Port was consistently experiencing less of a rise in standards than elsewhere in the county. This was especially true in relation to overcrowding.

Comparative household occupancy

	Persons per house	Rooms per house	Persons per room
County 1921	4.67	2.79	1.67
County 1931	4.22	2.92	1.45
Large burghs	4.30	2.62	1.64
Port Glasgow	**4.79**	**2.48**	**1.93**
Greenock	4.48	2.79	1.61
Paisley	4.05	2.58	1.62
Small burghs	4.49	2.80	1.50
Landward	4.01	4.04	0.99

Table 10[6]

The Port fared comparatively less well than the average for the county and also in comparison to the other larger burghs within the county.

The Port's working class population was housed largely in the traditional room and kitchen type dwelling with a significant number of single ends [one room dwellings] forming part of the housing stock. In fact, these types of dwellings accounted for the housing of almost 70% of the population of Port Glasgow in the 1930s.

[6] Census 1931Vol. II:180

Distribution of houses

	One room house	Two room house	Three room house
Large burghs	9.0 %	41.7 %	24.7 %
Port Glasgow	**8.0 %**	**59.5%**	**22.6 %**
Coatbridge	20.5 %	51.4 %	17.0 %
Motherwell & Wishaw	16.2 %	47.7 %	21.5 %
Hamilton	16.0 %	18.2 %	19.8 %
Paisley	11.0 %	51.4 %	21.9%
Glasgow	11.0 %	43.6 %	24.0 %
Greenock	10.2 %	44.8 %	27.6 %

Table 11[7]

Port Glasgow was also one of the worst affected areas in the west of Scotland with regard to the density of occupation of these working class dwellings. Only Coatbridge fared worse overall than Port Glasgow.

Density of occupation

	More than 2 person per room	More than 3 persons per room	More than 4 persons per room
Large burghs	38.7 %	10.2 %	6.6 %
Port Glasgow	**59.2**	**31.2**	**12.6**
Coatbridge	61.4	35.7	18.6
Motherwell & Wishaw	55.3	28.8	13.3
Hamilton	54.3	29.6	14.3
Paisley	44.9	20.2	8.2
Glasgow	42.3	13.1	7.5
Greenock	49.0	23.7	9.6

Table 12[8]

[7] Census 1931 Vol. II:154

These statistics are an accurate indicator of general trends, but they do not account for the machinations that were talking place privately at local level to make ends meet. Today's local authorities and government benefits agencies are increasingly concerned with the leakage of funds to rogue claimants, but like most other social phenomena, 'milking the system' has its pioneers in previous generations.

> Ma father wis an engine driver and there wis six o' us and Ah got no burroo [Labour Exchange] money. Ah left the house and put ma name down wi' a wuman down the street ... Ah didnae stay in it [her house] but the investigator would come up and say "No change?" Ah'd say "No change, Ah'm here yit". Ah couldnie have stayed in it, it wis a married wuman wi' a man and three weans in a room. The investigator didnae worry. That got me fifteen bob a week ... Ah wis aboot twenty two then. (John Waddell 2001:009)

Cassie Graham's experience was of sharing a bed with three other family members from childhood until the day she left home to get married at 19 years of age, and she was not unusual in this respect. If circumstances like these did not actively encourage marriage as a means of acquiring some, if only limited, freedom, then it certainly served to speed matters up once the right person had been found.

2.4.2 The Privacy Driving Force

The gaining of one's own space as opposed to the cramped conditions of the family home was of special significance. However constricted the space won through marriage might turn out to be, it was a private space for at least part of the day, and it was the woman's space to organise and covet. Of course, she would have to share this space with her husband, but he would be at work and, if unemployed, would probably be pursuing interests outside the home for a large part of the day (Meacham 1977:127). This, of course, brought with it a measure of privacy unknown to most

[8] Census 1931 Vol. II:160

young women in the traditionally overcrowded family households in the Port's town centre.

> The sink wis in the scullery but very small. Aw, Ah'll tell ye a terr [funny story] aboot that. Oor Tommy wus a great wan fur the fitba an he used tae go sometimes on a Saturday, an oor Kate wid be dyin' fur him tae go. The rest o' us wid ... she used tae say, 'Ah like tae waash masel on a Saturday when he goes oot'. An' she used tae say, 'Oh Tommy, ye'll be goin' up tae see the Celtic wun't ye, wunt ye?' An fur fun he used tae say, 'Och naw, naw, Kate Ah don't think Ah'll bother.' [She'd say,] 'Away you go fur God's sake an' get out ma sight!' ... aye, because ... it wis a tin bine [washtub]. Ye know, Ah'm gin aff ma subject but, people didn't realise the strouth [hardship] it wis when ye had tae lift it an empty it, oooh ... (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1997.17)

In the family home the routine matter of personal hygiene, especially for young women, posed a regular problem with room and kitchen or single end dwellings commonly housing upwards of six family members and sometimes a lodger. More personal and embarrassing to young women than having to wash one's body while guarding against male intrusion was dealing with the onset of womanhood and menstruation. Across class boundaries young women experienced their first period without the advice and assistance that could have eased the situation and staved off the understandable fear that was the natural reaction of many (Dyehouse 1986:36). Roberts reminds us that even though sanitary towels were patented in 1892 and were becoming more commonly used after the First World War, among her working class respondents they were definitely a post World War Two memory. They also recalled that the most common method of menstrual protection was "pieces of old towel or sheeting, which when dirty, were left soaking in buckets of cold water well away from the enquiring eyes of men or young children" (Roberts 191984:18). In Port Glasgow, homemade and reusable sanitary protection was also common and ideas of

decency and personal propriety forced women to contrive privacy for dealing with the necessary laundering involved.

> An' dae ye know another rotten thing tae. Whenever somebody wis ... menstruatin'. Oor Mary bought towelin' an she cut it up intae pads ... ye didn't go intae a shop an' buy them an' throw them away. Well, after that, when that [menstruation] happened, ye waited until ye were done an' ye waashed them. That's when Tommy wis oot, see he wis the only man in the hoose. Ye done that when he wisnae there. Well, after that, ye had them steepin' in a pail, well, after that ye took them an' ye boiled them in the house. Ye'd a kinna canister thing an' ye ... D'ye know, see young women now, they're gettin' aff on a coach in comparison [getting off lightly]. (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1997:17)

With tenement buildings crammed with families and childbirth being largely a home-based event, the lack of privacy did not simply affect family members. It often pervaded the whole tenement. Even the most private of human conditions was scrutinised by one's neighbours, and they were often wrong about what they thought was going on.

> Even a childbirth, it wis murder ... there wis a married wumin up above us, an' oor Tommy slept in the bed doon below. Y'know she wis stayin' wi somebody [husband] in the room. She'd her first wean, she wis nearly pullin' the place doon. He [Tommy] didn't know, didn't know ... He wis at his breakfast in the mornin' an' he wis pittin' on his boots an he says tae ma mam, 'Mother', he says, 'if that man hits that woman again ... Ah'm goin' up tae biff him!' (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1997:17)

Marriage offered the only way of obtaining a measure of personal space, although the space often amounted to no more than that available from a small room and a bed of one's own in another person's house. This was common for young couples in Port Glasgow throughout the nineteen thirties and beyond.

Letti Lyons experienced the same cramped home situation as Cassie Graham in the inter-war period and was sent out of the family home to live with her grandparents when she was young. Returning to the parental home she described as the "wild place" was more than she could stand, and she made her mind up to go her own way

as quickly as possible. Letti and her peers were well aware of the difficulties they would experience in married life, not least of which was the difficulty of finding a place to live and raise a family in. Nevertheless, marriage offered the only prospect of privacy and personal space.

> We didn't seem to be an awful close family, there were too many o' us Ah think. That's how Ah got moved when Ah wis younger, tae get awae frae everything. Makes ye hard y'know, when ye see poverty. When ye're brought up in poverty ye say tae yersel 'Right, Ah'm no' gonnie be that way'. Ah got married at 16 ... a way out ... aye, Ah suppose that's whit ye could call it. (Letti Lyons SA2001:008)

Not surprisingly, the wedding ceremonies of the interviewees were not grand affairs celebrated by a multitude of relations and friends and neighbours. In most cases the marriage ceremony would involve only the immediate family and friends and the celebration afterwards would be an intimate gathering.

2.5 Wedding Preparation and Celebration

Of course, getting married in the 1930's did not attract the pressures and demands it does now. "Nothing fancy" is the most common descriptive phrase used by the interviewees to describe weddings in the inter-war period. So, there was no real need for lengthy planning periods. In many cases, all that was required in a planning sense was to organise the clergy. Asked whether she and her husband-to-be spent any time planning their wedding day in 1931, Cassie Graham declared:

> Naw, ye jist made up yir mind tae get married an' that was that, maybe three or four months [between decision and deed]. (Cassie Graham SA1998:10)

The idea of a few months being about the right period of time between the proposal of marriage and the actual wedding seems to be most common among those

interviewed. It was enough time to organise the clergy, have banns read and allow word to circulate, allowing those who were most closely associated with the wedding party to prepare for the day.

People did not have the time, the space or the money for big celebrations. The most common way of rejoicing with family and friends was to arrange a "wedding tea" for after the church service. In most cases, this would take place in someone's house, usually the bride's family home, and would consist mainly of tea with something simple to eat, probably sandwiches and/or cakes prepared by the family. However, efforts were made to ensure that a supply of alcohol, normally whisky, was provided for those who took a drink. This was organised by the men. Even post-war wedding celebrations in the Port regularly observed the cultural axiom that restricted woman attenders to soft drinks and hot beverages.

> Everybody was drunk but then the women didn't drink; maybe just the odd wee auntie who took a sherry. If they took a toast that would be it in case anybody was lookin' at them. (Cathie Hagan SA1997:31)

A woman who drank, even if only to mark a special occasion, could be putting her reputation, which underpinned so much of the essence of community and a woman's place within it, on the line.

On the few occasions when the wedding tea was not put over in the house, it was usually held in a public hall. The Labour Party Hall in Bay Street provided the venue for Cassie and Neillie Graham's wedding celebration.

> Aye, we had a tea down in the Labour Hall ... we got tea and cakes an' a drink. That wis all. Couldn't afford a dinner. (Cassie Graham SA1998:10)

Sometimes circumstances combined to make the family home an impossible venue, no matter how desirable it might have been. If the bride and groom both came from

large families, as Cassie and Neillie did, and the bride's family home was a single end, as Cassie's was, then the venue was determined by these circumstances. Such a family affair could involve twenty or more people. Many of these would, of course, be children, but they would nevertheless require space, and there would also be a small number of friends and neighbours to consider. The hall could often be obtained free of charge and so proved ideal in such circumstances. Securing the use of a hall for one's wedding reception did not denote a more grandiose affair; in fact often the opposite was true.

However, we must not assume that marriage was only entered into as a convenient mechanism for material advantage. Loving relationships flourish in the darkest of circumstances, and Jim Renfrew treasures the memory he has of seeing his wife for the first time and falling in love with her.

> Ah knocked the door, name o' Heany on it, an' this girl came tae the door an' Ah'll never forget her, she'd a big, big long dress on, kinna purple colour, an' she'd been black leadin' the fireplace, she'd the blacklead brush in her hand an' she must have touched her face wi' it an' she hid a big black mark doon her face. An Ah says tae masel, Christ, that's a lovely lookin' girl, she wis beautiful, she had long jet- black hair. That's when Ah met her, when Ah met her ... Even ma cousin says she wis lovely lookin', Ah says, 'Ah know that'. He tried tae date her, but Ah think Ah won. (Jim Renfrew SA2001:003)

Where the possibility existed, the marriage was celebrated with a day-trip somewhere.

> When our mothers and fathers got married they didn't have receptions or anything ... no halls ... just have a wedding breakfast. They would go and get married and have a breakfast with their own two families. And nobody went on honeymoon, some people would maybe manage a day out and that would be it, back to work after that. (Hugo Hagan SA1997:31)

But this was unusual, and would have been exceptional if it took place on the day of the wedding. Any available money would be taken up by that event alone. The

day-trip, if it happened at all, would often take place weeks after the ceremony. The concept of honeymooning as understood by today's society is certainly a post-war development. Twenty years on from Cassie Graham's wedding in 1931, working class couples were still struggling to attain that illusive break away in celebration of their marriage. There were those, nevertheless, whose situation allowed them to take the opportunity - no matter how modest and uninspiring the resort may have seemed.

J.W.: We never had a big wedding; it was just like more or less family and friends ... in Neillie's father's house in Kelburn.

H.H.: There was no such thing as honeymoons?

J.W.: Aye well, eh, we just went tae Greenock.

H.H.: You actually went tae Greenock for a honeymoon?

J.W.: Aye ... we just went tae Nellie's grannie's ... she gave us a room ... an' we spent ... two weeks we spent doon in Greenock. We didn't go near the Port at all. (Josie Watson SA1998:12)

The overriding objective for Josie and her husband Neil, following their wedding in 1950, was to have some time on their own - anywhere.[9] The same desire lived within the hearts and minds of Cassie Graham and other newly-weds of the 1930s, but socio-economic conditions were radically different. For those whose husbands were lucky enough to be in employment, two days off work, never mind two weeks, would have been unthinkable; for those who were out of work, the whole idea was out of the question. For some couples marrying in the 1930s, the day was marked by a trip to the pictures or a dance in the afternoon.

> We went back to my mother-in-law's house [after the marriage ceremony] an' we had ham'n eggs, just the four o' us, me an' the wife and the best man an' the bridesmaid. Then we went tae Glasga an' we were gonnie go tae the picutre

[9] Port Glasgow and Greenock are neighbouring towns, and like many towns and villages situated so close together there exists a traditional rivalry between their inhabitants.

> an' then we seen this Geraldo's, and that wis a great orchestra in thae days [1935], so that wis it, we went in there. We came back at night an' that wis that, the weddin' an' the honeymoon all in the wan day. (Jim Renfrew SA2001:003)

The local economy and the influence of the local industry were paramount in the list of factors affecting the marriage ritual in Port Glasgow. Margaret O'Donaghue firmly believes that the pressure on young Port women to get married was immense and that financial security and the desire to have a home of one's own, away from the family home, in this male orientated community were the main motivating factors. Socially and economically the emphasis was on marriage sooner rather than later.

Statistical evidence shows that the propensity to marry among females in Port Glasgow in 1931 was most significant between the ages of 20-24, with a notable number approaching marriage earlier.

Marriage rates in Port Glasgow 1931

	15-19 y/o	20-24 y/o	25-29 y/o	30-34 y/o
Both sexes	1963	1627	1427	1337
Females	953*	807	691	681
Married females	39	244	374	520

Table 13[10]

*Approximately 20% of this group were under the legal age for marriage and should be excluded from the statistic reducing this figure to 763, meaning that 5.11% of those females between 16-19 were already married in 1931.

Significantly, the difference between those married in the 20-24 age group was more than six times the number in the younger band whilst the incremental difference among the higher bands was remarkably smaller.

H.H.: D'ye think there was more pressure when youse wir younger to get a man and get married?"

[10] Census 1931 Vol. II:93

M.O'D.: Exactly, exactly. Because nowadays very very often now ... the jobs are better, the money's better. A lassie's usually more kinna independent. And still ... the back o' the average [lassie's mind]... oh, when Ah'm older Ah'll hiv tae hiv a place of ma own. Ye see whit Ah mean? Because pit it this way, emdy thit's male, well they kin ask emdy oot anytime. But a woman always has tae wait till she's asked, an if she wis tae mibe ... almost say, c'mon oot a walk wi me, or whit about it, or all that, that fella might think that she wisny all she should be. D'ye follow whit Ah mean? But, nowadays, as Ah say, usually they make good money. (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1997:20)

Marriage took the place of permanent and well-paid work. Where the prospect of "good money" was nonexistent, a woman could through marriage rely on her husband's income to provide for the family and save her from a life in the Mill. More importantly, the existence of a husband guaranteed the real prospect of a proper home when one came their way. The shortage of accommodation meant that only the most needy were considered and in Emi Donnelly's experience only those women who had husbands were advised to apply.

> Aye, ye had tae have weans tae get on the points list [council system] but before that [pre-council housing] ye couldn't get a house unless ye were married cause ye needed a man tae sign for it ... over there at the office ... they didn't get a house, single women. They'd tae stay in somebody's room. (Emi Donnelly SA20001:012)

2.6 The Rented Room Compromise

> My mother, she had such a lesson in her own life sharing a house ... she'd a very unhappy life and it wasn't fair to my dad either. And that's really what killed her. And she said to me, 'Don't go into a room, I've got room for you here and you'll never be without shelter, but get a house. It does make a difference to your life.' ... Some people were years in rooms, couldn't get out of them and it separates a couple ... they're sharing where they shouldn't be. (Sarah Hagan SA2001:005)

In theory, three possible types of accommodation were open to a couple seeking a place to live in Port Glasgow in the inter-war period. At the top end of the market there was the room and kitchen dwelling, followed by single end accommodation. However,

the usual outcome of the search for accommodation was neither of these two possibilities; rather, it was a single room. This could either be a rented room, or a room in the parental home, usually the bride's. Roberts found that because "young people were not financially dependent; they were morally dependent too [and] most continued to live with their parents" after marriage (Roberts 1984:44). In this case, the couple were expected to contribute to the household.

> Whenever Ah got married at first, there were no houses in them days. Ah got ma mother-in-law's room, y'know we used tae live in a room then ... five or six year in that room ... With it being the wife's mother's we had the run o' the house sort o' style ... used tae go in there [kitchen]. But in a stranger's room ye had tae sit in yer ain room and dae yer cookin' in that ... but it being the mother's house ... more freedom, y'know. (Jim Renfrew SA2001:003)

A room in the parental home was the preferred option, as it was obviously in a household familiar to the newly-weds. Parental landlords would normally be more understanding and sympathetic to their financial situation and could generally be more easily approached. However, on the negative side, relations could also be strained by the addition of a new male adult to the bride's family household. Personality clashes and conflicting opinions over many domestic matters could always arise in the rented room situation, and this could be especially stressful if the parents happened to be the landlords. However, at a time when large families were the norm, it was difficult for parents to offer their offspring a room or a bed once they had married. Only the youngest child had this option in most cases. Cassie Kane recalls her experience:

> Sadie stayed wi' ma mother ... she wis the youngest. By that time we wir aw married ... but Agnes went intae a room, Cissy went intae a room, yer granda went intae a room an' Neillie went intae a room in Station Road before he got a house ... every wan o' us went intae a room. (Cassie Kane SA1998:11)

Renting a room in someone else's household was the most common form of accommodation for newly-weds in inter-war Port Glasgow. But life in a rented room made it difficult to cultivate the relationship envisaged for a married couple in the marriage vow. Although the young couple had more space and privacy in which to lie down at night, they had very little private space besides this. In fact, the rented room scenario was instrumental in moulding the newly-weds into the traditional gender roles readily associated with Scotland's industrial communities. If the women found it difficult to spend their time in the rented room then it was equally, if not more difficult, for the men. As men did not consider domestic chores their work, they spent much of their time outside the home. "The combination of material and demographic disadvantage meant that while wives struggled to keep the home together, their husbands and children often sought their pleasures elsewhere." (Stearns 1980:104)

Working class women spent their day in the domestic environment and saw little, if any, of that time pass on leisurely pursuits. Each day had its particular demands and time was of the essence. A botched job was a waste of precious time and men were not trained in the methods of washing and scrubbing and cooking and numerous other daily tasks that required an experienced hand. Life was difficult enough without running the risk of having to do things twice. So, even if some men had wished to take a modicum of domestic responsibility, their lack of background let them down. Margery Spring-Rice observes that in relation to labour- saving devices and organised co-operation "the poorest women have no time to spare for such immediately irrelevant considerations as the establishment of a different system"

(Spring-Rice 1939:96). She concludes that working-class women in the inter-war period thought themselves too late to benefit from the reforms which may have been introduced.

> They have their twelve or thirteen or fourteen hours work to do every day and their own day to day life to lead. It cannot stop, it cannot be interrupted; no-one else can do any of their jobs; and even if there is anyone else, like an adolescent daughter, or a kind husband, this would mean losing time at any rate for a little while as the pupil was learning; it might mean one meal at least being spoilt, one saucepan allowed to boil over, and there is no margin whatever for such waste, such loss of time; it requires less thought, even less physical energy, to do the job oneself. (Spring-Rice 1939:96)

The animating force of the gender based domestic dichotomy was inextricably linked to the suffocating living conditions which existed in the cramped housing in Port Glasgow's town centre and the Bay Area tenements. If conditions were difficult for those in a single end or room and kitchen, they were worse for those forced into rented room accommodation. The factors leading to the separation of male and female into their respective camps were both psychological and physical.

2.6.1 Cassie Kane and the Psychology of Rented Room Life

From the psychological point of view, rented room accommodation was not the newly-weds' space, nor was it a living space in which they could feel totally comfortable. Of course, in most cases the room was procured by the bride's mother, and if at all possible, it would be in the household of someone known to the mother. It does not, however, follow that the daughter would know her prospective landlord and, even if she did know him, that she necessarily liked or respected him. On the other hand, some couples moved into the house of a family whose name was barely known to them.

> Ah knew her tae see but Ah didn't actually know her but eh ... naw they wir alright. (Cassie Kane SA1998:11)

The main attraction of this room - a vital factor in Cassie agreeing to move in - was its close proximity to her mother's home. Their Bruce Street room was more or less across the road from her family home in Montgomery Street. Cassie considered herself very lucky. Not only was she close to her mother, her landlord treated her well.

> Ah'll gie him 'is due, the man 'issel. They were a young couple although they had two weans. That man went oot every mornin' it six a clock an' bought the rolls oot o' MacKillop's. They were jist made an they were waarm ... An he made me ma breakfast ... 'cos Nellie wid be away tae work. He'd rap at the room door an 'e'd lay me a cuppa tea an two o these baps it wis ... Ah got ma breakfast in the mornin'. (Cassie Kane SA1998:11)

But Cassie, like many others at that time, was not living in this room from choice. She felt she had no choice. She may have preferred to stay and lodge with her mother until some other house turned up, but this was not an option. When Cassie got married, she had three sisters who were still living in the family home, not to mention two lodgers. It mattered little that Montgomery Street room and kitchens were more spacious than their town centre counterparts.

> Well at that time ... Ah mean when ye got married ye had tae go an' live in a room because there wis no place ye could go tae. Either yer mother took ye in or ye went an' got a room aff o' somebody. ... George Street houses [town centre] Ah mean, ye couldn't whip a cat in them they were that small an' Ah mean there were big, big families rared in George Street ... aye there were big families rared in it ... even Montgomery Street. The houses in Montgomery Street, the rooms were pretty big, but ye hid nothin in it. It wis aw beds. If ye went intae a hoose wi a big family there wir mibe four beds innat room an' then ye hid yer recess bed in the livin room [kitchen]. (Cassie Kane SA1998:11)

A rented room was the only viable option open to Cassie and Neillie. Cassie had to be consoled by the fact that hers was a fair landlord. But she was nevertheless aware of her temporary and precarious position within the household. Everyday tasks could

often appear troublesome and complicated to fulfil. The ever-present fear of falling foul of the tenants could exaggerate small concerns into a quandary of the highest order.

C.K.: We always had tae go intae that wumin's livin room door n' rap the door ... she'd tell ye tae come in an' ye filled this bucket up n' took it back intae yer room.

H.H.: Did you feel like you were intruding?

C.K.: That wis the only thing Ah didn't like aboot it, hivin' tae go in an' get waater. (Cassie Kane SA1998:10)

As it happens, the landlady made no fuss about this practice. She recognised it as a necessary nuisance if she wanted to rent out the room. But, it was an essential practice that nevertheless concerned Cassie. Although she was roughly aware of her landlord's movements regarding work times, bed times, meal times etc, she was not privy to their every movement within the house. By Cassie's own admission, she went for water only when the tenants were there. There was no question of going into their kitchen when they were out. So, knowing when to go so as to disturb them least was a problem. There was a natural and mutual desire for some privacy and personal space by both parties, although it has to be recognised that there would be a greater level of tolerance concerning these matters then. Cassie came to an unwritten working arrangement with her landlady concerning access to the kitchen for things like water, but even very simple tasks like maintaining a decent water supply were enough to cause pause for thought. It was imperative for Cassie and Neillie to consider things like time, noise and tidiness in every action. Inviting friends to the room for tea and a chat could prove to be a major headache.

> If we were takin' visitors, wans thit we knew, Ah wid hiv the tea n' sugar n' all that an' Ah'd go intae her [landlady] room an' put the kettle on ... ye couldn't

leave a mess, some did but Ah wouldn't 'cause she could say, 'get out'. (Cassie Kane SA1998:11)

Even though Cassie had a good relationship with the tenants, the threat of summary eviction was ever present, and not necessarily for some major misdemeanour. A clash of personalities or some minor infringement of the rules may have been enough to see a young couple ejected from their room.

C.K.: Many's a wan would be thrown out. They [tenants] wouldn't tolerate them, they would just open the door an' throw them out. They wid hiv naewhere tae go. Sometimes it separated a family cause he hid tae go tae his people and she wid have tae go tae her people.

H.H.: Did that happen?

C.K.: Aye it happened ... or else they bundled up an' went tae England. Oh, there were some people pretty bad y'know. Ye really had tae watch ... whose room ye were gin intae. (Cassie Kane SA1998:11)

Of course, we cannot assume that the tenants were always the protagonists in any such domestic quarrels. Lodgers were capable of making life difficult for themselves by unreasonable behaviour. But the power and ultimate authority lay with the landlord in every case. Lodgers had no recourse to the law and had no rights whatsoever regarding their sub-tenancy. As a result, evictions and bad landlord-lodger relations occurred frequently.

C.K.: But then ye got other wans thit the house they were stayin' in ... they were mibe a quarrelsome [family] an' they wid jist say tae ye 'OUT!', an' ye jist hid tae get out, ye were pit out on the street. Y'know, they never gie ye any time tae think n' they were pittin' the people out in the street.

H.H.: Did that happen often?

C.K.: Oh aye, that happened often, they were pit out in the street. Some o' thir people ... wid make room fur them an' they'd go an look fur another room ... Ah wis lucky. Ah wis jist wan o' the lucky wans 'at got a good place. (Cassie Kane SA1998:10)

Cassie has memories of her landlords to illustrate the fair and neighbourly way she was treated.

C.K.: An' then if ye were usin' the gas ring ye ha' tae put in yer money in a meter ... mibe it wis only a penny ... dependin' how long, every time it went oot ye pit in yer money ... Ah think about an hour. An' then every so often the man would come roon' an' empty that meter an' give the woman that owned the house so much back. Mibe she'd hiv say five poun' in it, he'd mibe gie her two poun' back or somethin'. Well, it wis up tae her whether she gave you anythin' back.

H.H.: An did she?

C.K.: Oh aye, Ah got it back right enough. She halved it right down, she took wan half an' she gied me the other ... The people ah stayed wae were exceptionally awful good. (Cassie Kane SA1989:10)

Yet, even Cassie, who has memories of a very fair landlord, knew well that all the power and authority lay clearly with the landlord. Access to the water tap, to the gas ring, the landlord's kind gesture of making breakfast each day, and the landlady's generosity in dividing the 'meter money' could all disappear through a quarrel or a simple change of mind on the part of the landlord. Over night Cassie's position in her room could come to resemble the business transaction it ultimately was. Thus, the lack of autonomy, power and common rights of tenants were the most pervasive of all psychological factors. Behind every action lurked the prospect of homelessness. The only room in 5 Bruce Street, which Cassie felt she could use without concerning the tenant family, was the toilet.

> It wis a big long lobby an' at the wan end o' the lobby was where Ah lived an' at the top end o' it was where she lived, but on the other side o' that wis the toilet. Ah mean the toilet wis alright ... eh, we coulda went intae the toilet quite freely. (Cassie Kane SA1998:10)

It is striking that Cassie refers to the act of using the toilet facility "quite freely". She was obviously content with the people she was lodging with, but her emphasis

on ease of access to the toilet alludes to the fact that, in other respects, she felt very much a quest and not comfortable in the house. The problems associated with living in a rented room were many and the fundamental problem of a married couple having no rights or authority in their home, however temporary or unsuitable it might have been, was a major consideration. The restraints this situation created had very real consequences. This situation played a large part in developing a culture which saw men spend most of their time away from the domestic scene, while the women too, endeavoured to spend as much time as possible out of the room.

2.6.2 The Physical Difficulties of Life in a Rented Room

Rented rooms were not equipped with the basic facilities necessary to allow a couple to live there. They were not designed for living in; rather, they were for sleeping in.

> There wis nothing in it ... not a thing in that room. (Cassie Kane SA1998:10)

There were very real obstacles to any prospect of living a normal life there. We have already seen the difficulties surrounding the most basic task of maintaining a decent water supply in accommodation not designed for family life. The problems experienced in trying to negotiate time and space to maintain a pail of water in the room were equalled only by the limitations and difficulties experienced in trying to cook a meal. Whilst the difficulties of working class life in a small home with limited amenities for the range of family needs, including cooking, are well documented[11], life for Port families raised in rented room accommodation, which had no proper

[11] Cf. Roberts 1984

cooking facilities, is less well covered. Necessity forced Port wives to use their ingenuity and cook meals on what means were available.

> There wis no fire [stove]. D'ye mind o' the wee room grates that used tae be in the houses, a wee fire like that ye'd tae dae yir cookin' on it. (Cassie Graham SA1998:10)

These "wee room grates" were the smallest type of domestic coal fire facility available. They accepted no more than a small shovel full of coal at a time and were designed specifically to provide heat for the room. They were, under no circumstances, designed to cook over. Yet, with a bit of invention, this was exactly what happened.

> An' he got me a wee ... made it in the yard, it swung over [the fire] that ye could 'a set a pot on it tae heat at the fire, y'know tae cook at the fire ... ye've no idea. (Cassie Graham SA1998:10)

The "sweevel", as it was called, provided room dwellers with the ability to make use of the coal fire but, at one pot at a time, and with a fairly low level of heat, it was not ideal. It was used more to retain the heat in something which was already cooked or to make and keep tea warm.

Another contraption was invented to compensate for the inadequacy of the coal fire.

> There was a gas light onto the wall and the man that we lived wi', he attached a tube like, an' it wis a gas ring. So that's whit we cooked on. (Cassie Kane SA1998:10)

Every couple living in rented room accommodation and who had a family member or friend in the shipyards would be provided with a gas ring. This was simply a length of pipe with both ends sealed and the ends bent round to meet each other, creating a circular tube. Small holes were made on the top side of the pipe. A small drilled bush, over which a rubber hose would fit, was inserted into the side of the

pipe. The other end of the rubber hose was squeezed over the inlet valve of the gas mantle light and thus provided a gas cooking appliance. A highly dangerous form of cooking, this was one which was extremely common.

> Ah mean ye never heard of anybody's home goin' on fire or any explosions because of this gas, y'know, thit somehow or other they managed tae overcome all that without hivin' any great accidents. (Hugo Hagan SA1997:31)

Nevertheless, even with the homemade gas appliance, cooking was extremely cramped and difficult to perform. The will and capability to manage using such a system would wane very quickly, especially if, as in Cassie Graham's case, the couple lived in the room for over three years and had to cope with three young children at the same time. The sparsely furnished rented room was often no more than hotel style accommodation. It was simply somewhere to sleep and often showed little sign of habitation other than what that required.

For most, the rented room was the first step in the journey towards a single end or a room and kitchen dwelling. Although it was widely regarded as a temporary measure, despite the fact that many spent years in a rented room before acquiring proper home, it was considered a home. By virtue of the fact that the room was small and considered temporary, the more ambitious notions of better and more home furnishings and more space were aspirations to be fulfilled when the proper single end or room and kitchen dwelling came along.

However, respectability and the landlord demanded that the room be well looked after and this, coupled with the feeling that this room represented the first step towards a proper family home, precipitated the drive to furnish the room and

endeavour to make it feel homely. But scant resources made even the most basic task of covering the floor a difficult one.

> There were people in ma day had bare boards ... no linoleum on their floor ... an they tried tae keep themselves as clean as possible. (Cassie Graham SA1998:11)

Covering the floor of their new home was the first of many hurdles that young married women knew were coming their way, and they would go to great lengths and employ cunning strategies and financial astuteness to get the floorboards in their house covered as quickly as possible.

> The gents outfitters at the bottom of John Wood Street wis movin' out. Ah wis always wan for trying tae get on. They had good inlaid linoleum on the floor an' Ah went an' asked them for some. They telt me tae take as much as Ah wantit, ten shillins they took aff me. So, that covered the floor. (Cassie Graham SA1998:11)

The floor was often not completely covered with linoleum but partially covered with a long thin strip of carpet designed for stair covering.

> We bought a carpet, a runner they called it. That saw us in and then as time went on ... we bought linoleum ... carpet wis jist a stair runner tae deaden the sound ... it wis jist the bare boards. (Cassie Kane SA1998:10)

Having done what they could about floor covering, the family had to concern itself with furnishing the room as best they could. Again the understanding was that this would be a piecemeal operation undertaken with the assistance of the family.

> You could rely on them to help you out more wance you got married [as opposed to relying on them for presents for marriage], furniture and odds and ends. Ye didn't look for so much then anyway. (Hugo Hagan SA1997:31)

This was the common experience of young couples in the inter-war period. The expectation, or rather the hope, was that once married the newly-weds could rely on family and friends to rally round with cast-off items of furniture for their new home. But for many, even this could not be taken for granted.

H.H.: Did you rely on your mother's help on the move to Sandringham? [tenement buildings]

C.G.: How could she, Hugh? Ah wis the oldest o' ten o' a family. She bought me ma bed n' beddin [a bed tick and sheets] an' she pit by the tea at the weddin'. (Cassie Graham SA1998:11)

Cassie's mother, like all mothers, would not have allowed her daughter to be married without the traditional motherly present of "bed and bedding". This was a tick, i.e. a wool-filled mattress, and the sheets to cover it. It would be unlikely that the couple's new home would be without a set-in bed, but the tick was transported at the flitting just as other personal artefacts and furnishings were and it would travel with them in any subsequent moves. Neillie's parents were both dead when he and Cassie got married, his sister acted on behalf of the mother in buying a present - three chairs - for his wedding. Of course, there could be no dependency on wedding presents to help out.

> People hadn't the money tae buy ye presents. Know wan o' the presents Ah got? Ye'd hardly credit it ... a big black iron fryin pan an' two soup plates. Two plates an' a fryin pan! Another wan wis ... a wee mirror that size (the palm of her hand). That wis the presents. People hadn't got it [money]. (Cassie Graham SA1998:11)

But her bedding and chairs were the main items making an impression on the emptiness of the room that was found for her and Neillie.

> Goin' intae that room ... ye started wi' nothin'. Ah went back tae ma work ... for nine months ... in the Mill an' it left me a wee kin' o' roughness o' money, the pay wis £1/4s [£1.20] that wis no' bad then. An' Ah got a secon' handed table ... wi scrubbed top ... Ma mother bought us the bed n' beddin' and ma sister-in-law bought three chairs. Well, that's whit I started married life wi' ... and it wis a long hard struggle through the years gatherin' a house thegither. (Cassie Graham SA1998:11)

Cassie, like other working class wives, could not afford to buy things for the house upon entry. She dealt with her situation by returning to work. Cassie's earnings from

her employment in Birkmyre's Mill went towards the acquisition of household necessities and furniture for the room.

> All second handit stuff ... Ah had. Ah got a chist o' drawers doon at a wee antique shop at Ladyburn, a bookcase, that wis *all* Ah wis needin a bookcase, but Ah wanted it tae fill in a corner, y'know. (Cassie Graham SA1998:11)

This was not much, but along with her table and chairs these larger items served to take up space in the room. Even in the Glasgow Road rooms, which were larger than those to be had in the town, relatively little was needed to take up space.

> Well, Ah wid say it wis a big room because we ended up we were nine months in that room an we ended up ... we got bedroom furniture, we hid wir table an' chairs, chist a' drawers and a wee cabinet ... it wis big enough tae hold all that. It wis a recess bed, it didn't stick out. (Cassie Kane SA1998:10)

A balance needed to be struck between the amount of furniture wanted and the type of furniture needed. Cassie Graham suggests she was being financially reckless by buying a bookcase. She had no books to put in the bookcase, but it would serve the more useful task of storing pots and crockery. Furniture was not considered for its beauty but for its usefulness. Drawers for example were the most crucial item, but not for the most obvious of reasons.

> Well we had tae keep our food in a drawer ... that wis the only thing we could put our food in. An' for clothes, before Ah got this wardrobe we had tae hing oor clothes on the back of the door, pit a nail ... hammer a nail in. Ah mean it wis the hard times when we got married. (Cassie Kane SA1998:10)

The inventiveness employed often took advantage of the opportunity for decoration and handiwork to brighten the room up.

> An then at each side o' the fire for puttin' coal in it wis barrels, apple barrels an' that's whit yir coal wis in ... wir coal bunkers ... an' we done them all up, painted them dark brown an put a cushion on top. Ah mean that wis the things ye had tae dae. (Cassie Kane SA1998:11)

Cassie Graham also remembers the coal bunkers in the room and recalls the major headache caused by this method of storage.

> And when ye got coal in, intae yer room, Ah'd wan ae them big butter barrels, know them big massive barrels, ye'd get yer coal intae it. Y'know what like yer room wis eftir the coal went in. Ye'd tae clean it from end tae end wi' the dust affa the coal. (Cassie Graham SA1998:11)

The problems associated with having coal stored in the actual living quarters are easily deduced. This particular aspect of room life forces home the point made earlier by Cassie Graham that it was often impossible to maintain acceptable levels of hygiene. It must have been difficult enough to keep themselves and their household surfaces clean under normal circumstances with only cold water.

> It wis nearly impossible in them days tae keep yersel [clean]. How could ye? Thir no way o' keepin yersel, ye'd no hot water nor nothin'. (Cassie Graham SA1998:11)

Yet, the drive to maintain a level of personal hygiene held and so did the struggle to make the room habitable by gathering furniture. The couple depended on either having the money to buy something themselves or on reaping the benefits when a family member gifted them something.

> Oh God, the day eftir Ah got married Ah discovered Ah hid nothin' tae eat [with]. It wis wan o' ma friends brought me over two knives, n' forks, n' spoons. If Ah hid any visitors they jist hid tae wait their turn, Ah'd no cutlery. Getherin' frae day tae day. (Cassie Graham SA1998:11)

Cassie reckons she was lucky because she could return to the Mill and earn a wage to help out after marriage. However, she was less fortunate in that she came from a large family who were themselves struggling to make ends meet, and she married a man who, having returned from seven years in the army, had to start work at the bottom end of the shipyard wage scale. After three years in her rented room, having

worked for nine months of that time, Cassie had still not accumulated enough to allow her to purchase the second-hand chest of drawers, considered an absolute necessity by all room dwellers.

> D'ye know, thi're some o' the young couples gettin' married then they'd nowhere tae keep thir food. An orange box they had an' they put a bit o' crettane, fancy cloth, roun' it on a string an kept their food on the shelf. The orange boxes were split intae three ... Ah'd wan anaw, an' it sat in the corner. It looked like two shelves inside an' this bit o' fancy cloth roun it. Most o' the young couples did that in them days. (Cassie Graham SA1998:11)

Psychologically and functionally, rented rooms were not fit for family life or married relationships. But without the ability to leave the family home, marriage would be neither attainable nor sustainable. There was a need for privacy and somewhere to be intimate. The rented room afforded young couples this right. However, apart from being cramped, this kind of accommodation could also be relentlessly unpleasant, and it could pose a serious health hazard.

> Naw, no cupboards. Coal in a barrel ... An' it wis rat ridden. Seems they rats used tae come up from the quay. We used tae hear them at night, the rats. Eftir Neillie [Cassie's eldest child] wis born ... ye've heard o' them tacklin' infants? Ah says Ah wonder where they rats are comin' from ... he'd [husband] a brainwave, pulled the wee fire out an' it wis full o' holes in the back o' it ... When we were sleepin' at night, those rats were comin' out. So he broke up two or three bottles, stuck them down the holes and plastered over them. Two or three times ye'd have made a piece for his work ... ye'd get up in the mornin' the rats wid hiv the piece ett. We got rid o' them for a while anyway ... Ye thought nothin' o' it in them days, everybody lived the same, all the poorer classes. (Cassie Graham SA1998:11)

There were very real physical and psychological barriers to life in a rented room, which threatened the relationship between spouses. This situation confirmed and perpetuated the traditional male versus female cultures associated with urban industrial society in the inter-war period and beyond. Cassie's bed, table and three chairs certainly did not encourage her to spend a minute more in her rented room

than she had to. While the husband could employ the tradition of male detachment from the home and spend time with male friends elsewhere, wives were culturally tied to the home and were thus limited in their options to escape the confines of their rented room. It was often a rather less temporary measure than was first envisaged, and the consequences of this could undermine the very fabric of the married couple's relationship. Long spells spent apart each day escaping the confines of the room and seeking the company of family and friends instead of developing their own relationship often took its toll on young couples. As Sarah Hagan says[12], "they were sharing where they shouldn't be".

[12] Cf. p.109 above.

Chapter Three

DOMESTIC STRATEGIES AND THE SEARCH FOR A HOME OF ONE'S OWN

> Oh, it wis terrible. Ah wis three years in another person's room, they lived in the kitchen as they called it, an' they let oot their bedroom, this bedroom for five shillin's a week ... Ah lived there three years an' Ah never wis out the factor's office. There were no buildin' schemes in them days, very few. Woodhall nor none o' these places were built ... the only chance ye had o' gettin' a house was if somebody died, an' the house was give up. Ah wis three years before Ah got a house. (Cassie Graham SA1990:114)

It would be incorrect to suggest that today's society takes the issue of housing for granted but it is fair to say that for most people expectations have changed. For many working class couples today the prospect of spending some time in the parental home after marriage, awaiting a house of their own, is unusual but not unheard of; the idea of renting a room in someone else's home is. However, in Port Glasgow in the 1930s this was very common for newly weds. Large families, small houses and a generally high level of poverty were the major factors contributing to this tradition of sub-letting rooms to newly married couples.

However, other critical factors were involved in the decision by some women to live in the cramped conditions afforded them by rented accommodation after marriage, even though this was not the only accommodation available. Some couples were offered a home of their own but rejected it in favour of the compromising confines of a rented room. It was such a decision that precipitated Cassie Graham's three long years of rented room accommodation.

> Ah wis offered a house when Ah got married at first oot the Glasgow Road ... and Ah refused it because it was too far for me ... the shipyards, n'everythin' wis jist at hand [in the town]. You could live cheaper that way, no bus fares tae pay. (Cassie Graham SA1998:10)

Cassie's decision is indicative of the fact that more important than the acquisition of a proper home was the desire to be close to family, friends, familiar amenities and systems that one grew up with. Before Cassie's wedding took place, she knew that, whatever shape her marital accommodation might take, it would be in the centre of the town. She made her decision completely independently of her husband's wishes. In anticipation of this situation, it was Cassie's mother, struggling to make ends meet for the nine remaining members of her household, who was compelled to secure a place for the newly weds to live (cf. Appendix Figure 26).

> Yer maw fixed that up. Yer mother did all the business beforehand but wance ye got married ye'd tae go it [alone] ... She'd a helped ye get a room aff someb'dy ... When ye're young ye don't know people that's got houses. (Cassie Graham SA1998:09)

Both Cassie and her mother were aware that the home was important not simply for what it afforded in terms of space; its whereabouts in the town did not prohibit access to the family home, familiar amenities ands social circles and the assistance that could be had from these in difficult times. If there was a need to choose, then space was always going to be the loser in Cassie's book. Also, to live at a distance from the shipyards possibly meant to miss out on the work opportunities they provided and to think about transport, the cost of fares, and the difficulties it posed for a husband to come home at lunchtime, which was a common practice.

It is also true that private property building developments were on the wane since

World War I and municipal housing was only slowly taking shape in Scotland in the 1930s[1]. Renting a room in someone else's house was a common method of gaining shelter in many parts of Scotland, and it was a particularly popular one in Port Glasgow.

Distribution of sublets in 1931

	Occupied Private houses	Houses with sub-lets	Houses with 1sub-let	Houses with 2 or more sub-lets	% of sub-lets in all private houses
Scotland**	1,146.852	1,123,375	22,050	1,147	2.0
Port Glasgow	**4,027**	**3,849**	**176**	**2**	**4.4**
Greenock	16,929	16,283	616	30	3.8
Coatbridge	9,155	8,838	306	11	3.5
Motherwell & Wishaw	14,390	14,021	376	2	2.6
Hamilton	8,193	7,986	202	5	2.5
Paisley	20,628	20,379	241	8	1.2
Glasgow	256,171	252,399	3556	216	1.5

Table 14[2]

** The Census order for sub-letting statistics includes only houses which have sub-lets to one or more families and does not account for the number of rooms sub-let to lodgers or boarders.

For a young woman to know the importance of easy access to support and credit was to understand the importance of the various strategies employed by her mother and which she, too, would need to be able to call upon at critical times in her married life. Issues like the provision of food and clothing for the family and the payment of debts were crucial to the larger goal of survival and earning the respectability of those who one would have to depend on through the hard times ahead.

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[1] For more information cf. Adams (1978:155-186).
[2] Census 1931, Vol. I:187

Just as young women readily understood the notion of female responsibility for the home, because their formative years had been a domestic apprenticeship to their mothers, they also knew that it was their responsibility in many cases to deal with the issue of acquiring housing. Married women who were successfully managing and organising their own home for some time had acquired the know-how and contacts to tap into this social organisation, and just as Cassie relied on her mother to find her a place to live after marriage, so others did too. As McCrone & Elliot (1989a:12) conclude, "... it was working class mothers who spoke for their daughters ... and tried to obtain housing for them when they married."[3] The women had the contacts and the mechanisms for dealing with factors and their agents who had the power to allocate housing. Friendship, neighbourly contacts and street-wise 'know-how' were essential to the successful acquisition of a place to live.

Interestingly, Cassie claims above that due to her young age she did not know many people "with houses". Of course, Cassie knew many people "with houses", i.e. people eager to accept lodgers, at that time. But a young woman about to be married or recently wed had not established herself in managing a home and paying the bills etc. in the eyes of her female peers. She had no real credentials. So, the message behind the statement "when ye're young ye don't know people" is actually that 'you' are not known yourself. It was thus of crucial importance to have a mother who was respected, but it was also essential for a young married woman to quickly understand the role that successful management of household strategies would play in determining one's respectability

[3] Men could be instrumental in gaining housing too, especially where tied shipyard housing was possible.

among friends and neighbours.

The respectability and social credentials cultivated by a wife and mother over a lifetime could not be guaranteed to automatically transfer to the younger generation. Of course, a good family name would be important and useful in the neighbourhood to which one belonged, but outside of that neighbourhood its influence would be limited. To those women dependent upon family assistance when state social benefits were minimal, the immediacy of assistance was more important than the knowledge that it was available on request; and that meant living as close to assistance as possible. The "immobility of the poor, and the survival of the extended family were occasioned by ... the dependence of the poor upon the facilities and services provided by their immediate locality; they relied heavily upon local labour markets, upon the extended family and ... neighbourhood-based systems of support. Their dependence upon local labour markets was inimical to even relatively short-distance mobility." (Benson 191989:128)

Moving a mile or two away from the family home would be inconsequential by today's standards, but in the 1930s it meant to detach yourself from a credit system open to you as a hereditary right, and to "go it alone". This would not be a realistic step for a young couple reliant upon the husband's irregular employment and inconsistent wages. Thinking about the inevitable hard times ahead, Cassie decided it would be unwise to consider moving from the town centre security to a bigger and better house in the Glasgow Road area. She believed that such a move would mean leaving behind her mother's credit worthiness and the contacts that she would need not only to support her own family, but to gain respectability in the long run.

Respectability largely depended upon one's ability to cope with the daily rigours of making a meagre budget stretch to sustain the family. This could only be done through properly managing domestic strategies such as those relating to the provision of shelter, warmth, food and clothing.

3.1 The Art of Survival

3.1.1 Budgeting for Food

3.1.1.1 Rationing Domestic Resources

> Ma maw used tae say,'Pay yer rent, should ye never eat meat, pay yer rent fur ye must have a shelter.' You can make little do in the food line, but ye must have a shelter an' Ah always believed in that all ma life. Ah paid ma rent even if Ah had tae cut doon in other things. If ye cannie pay it wan week ye cannie pay it double the next. (Cassie Graham SA1998.09)

Cassie Graham's training in the strategies of household management taught her to confront many of the difficulties of married life without constant recourse to her mother or siblings. Nevertheless, the irregular employment of her husband had a critical effect on her ability to balance the family budget. She, in common with other working class women, was required to make fundamental decisions over issues like food and warmth and shelter, decisions that often came down to a choice based on what was affordable. Food and shelter were the top priorities of any family, but even between these two fundamental issues there was often a choice to be made. Cassie would also be required to make decisions over other fundamentals such as time and clothing and household goods. Years of training under her mother had prepared her for stretching even the smallest amount of money.

For those families suffering at the worst end of the poverty scale the best way of stretching a budget was to save on using or expending energy and resources including foodstuffs. It was not unknown for some families to go without in order to protect sparse resources. In its extreme form this could involve abstention from using the basic requirements for long-term good health, i.e. food and heat provision, until the circumstances that had brought this situation about abated.

> Ah never done it but Ah heard wans sayin' they used tae stay in their beds till dinnertime tae save a meal. That's whit they did it fur ... people were half starved. Ah never wis as hard up as that. (Cassie Graham SA1998:11)

There were very many other instances where staying in bed longer than usual was used as a method of preserving vital fuel and other resources.

> Ma father was a great wan for puttin' a big fire on. He wis always up about five o' clock in the mornin' if he was workin', he went awae to work early, but if he wisnae workin' he was still up early an' ma mother used tae say, he'd get up an' burn all the coal instead o' stayin' in bed and saving it a bit, y'know ... Ah mean ye couldn't even afford a bag o' coal that was only wan an' odds [one shilling] ... we went an' took a bath and ye got a quarter of a hundredweight in the wee bath ... you're talking about sixpence worth o' coal ... and you carried that away with you. (Agnes Mulholland SA2001:002)

Foregoing food and other necessities was a regular rather than an occasional event. The notion that there would always be plenty to go around was an alien one. Rather, the understanding was that there would always be shortfalls of the basic requirements to make the household function properly and that in these circumstances the women would automatically put themselves behind the men in the queue to be served.

> Ah served the men [husband and sons] and Ah got whit wis left an' if there wis nothin' left then Ah got none ... Ah hardly ever sat doon at the table with them. Served all the men first. An' if it looked skimpy on the plates Ah'd've

> done without tae gie it tae them, maybe eat a tottie or somethin' if there wis wan left. Ma maw wis the same ... the workers must be fed ... it wis hard working in the yerds in them days. (Cassie Graham SA1998.11)

In their efforts to ensure that the men got the nourishment they needed Cassie and her like were continuing a tradition set by previous generations of working class wives. Oddy (1970:321) claims that by reserving the most nourishing food for the men, wives were eating no more or any better than their children and that whilst the men could expect a meal of meat or fish and vegetables, women often had to survive on bread and tea. As with any commonly and regularly experienced hardship, methods for combating its worst effects are developed by the sufferers. With respect to the provision of food in Port Glasgow's working class households in the1930's, the solution to poverty came in the shape of large pots of stew or soups that could feed a family.

3.1.1.2 No-Nonsense Food

> It wis soup, soup and more soup ... totties, mince and totties and soup, soup, soup all the time! (Jim Renfrew SA2001:003)

The enduring memory of working class family meals in the inter-war period is the lack of variety in their diet. Women trying to manage small budgets were necessarily constrained in what food they could buy and, inevitably, their choice was ultimately made on what they were able to afford and what would suffice for the family, it terms of quantity and not quality. It was a strategy which earned working class mothers a bad reputation among those who studied the subject. Margery Spring Rice observed (1939:156) that "it is possibly true that better nourishment would be possible even with

the income she has if the housewife exercised a more scientific choice of food ... and if there were greater knowledge about cooking and preparation."

Nevertheless, like all survival systems and strategies created to deal with austerity, the appeal of the soup or stew diet was, in reality, the inexpensive nature of it and, of course, the ease with which it could be managed. It had the added attraction of having a long life too. Time and money could be saved if the pot of food could be made to last as long as possible by continually adding to it rather than finishing it and starting a new pot afresh. It goes without saying that the stock ingredients for these meals, mince and vegetables, could be had relatively cheaply.

> Things were cheap but the wages were very low, ye couldn't afford much. Ah used tae keep a budget and only allow maself so much every day for food. If ye didn't ye would be starvin' before the end o' the week. It [meals] was usually mince or soup or stew, something that you could divide up among a family. (Cassie Graham SA1990:114)

However, there was another attraction to pots of soup or stew alongside those of low cost and the ease with which they could be made, and made to last. Making soup was a time-saving device. Large pots of food released otherwise burdened working class mothers from the chore of actually serving the family meal. Cassie recalls that it meant she was able to leave the distribution of the food to another family member if she did not expect to be around at meal times. This was especially useful when circumstances forced Cassie to return to work in the Mill. The initial preparation was still her duty to perform and sometimes, if she could not manage the night before, it meant rising even earlier from bed to do so. Making a large pot of soup or stew in the early morning before starting a 7.30am shift in the Mill was not uncommon for Cassie. It had to be done if

Neil and the children were to have a meal ready for them if and when they returned home before her. They didn't know it, but working-class children and fathers were among the earliest recipients of the 'fast-food' culture in the Port.

> Ah wis goin' oot along wi' him [7am] ... tae the Mill. Ah used tae get up in the mornin', Ah hid stuff [food] in an' Ah'd cook. It wis mostly stew or mince or somethin' like that Ah cooked an' Ah cooked the potatas before Ah went tae ma work. Ah cooked all that, an set the table and left the pots wi' the food in them an' when big Neillie came in he heated that up, 5 minutes would've heated it up. That's the only way Ah could've worked it. (Cassie Graham SA1998:11)

The benefits of the pots of stew or soup did not end here. They were of much more significance to the daily routine and busy schedule of the working mother and wife. As a time-saving device they were without competition, for we must remember that in the 1930s households were without many of the modern conveniences of today.

> Rough and ready stuff ... no-nonsense food. A good big bowl o' soup, porridge in the mornin's, ye had tae get up and help make the porridge in the mornin' at the fire ... Ah think the food wis better then than it is noo, because it wis the real mackay, it wis made. Yer mother bought vegetables, she bought fresh vegetables and she made big pots o' soup ... ye see the food wouldn't last long in the house, ye ate it as ye bought it there wis nae refrigerators or anythin' like that ... they [women] went shoppin' everyday. (Jim Pettigrew and John Waddell SA2001:009)

In relation to food storage, no device could be more significant than the fridge and/or freezer. The idea of storing perishable food in the house was unthinkable and the only way round this was to shop every day of the week and purchase foodstuffs as and when required. Stews and soups lasting for more than one meal could alleviate the burden of daily shopping and preparation of food.

> Totties n'mince, totties n'cabbage, slice n'onions. Nae fancy stuffs or frozen stuff in them days. It wis bought daily. Everyday ye had tae go out for yer

> messages. Now ye could stay in for three or four days, a week! (Bessie O'Neill SA2001:011)

Soups, stews and other meals which could be made in large pots to serve a large family for at least one meal, if not more, represented the main method of stretching the budget to keep the family fed between incomes. Soups obviously relied on vegetables and water for the main ingredients, but the goodness of the stock was supplied by whatever leftovers could be had cheap at the butchers. 'Sheep's heid broth' had long been a traditional Scottish meal, and the inexpensive nature of the main stock ingredient made this kind of soup popular among working-class mothers. It was not, however, always popular with those who had to eat it.

> Ye never knew when ye were gonnie eat and when ye wurnie gonnie eat. Naw, there wis nae big feasts in them days. The most ye ever got wis a pot o' soup. Min' ma oul' grannie, she wid make a pot o' soup an' it wis wae a sheep's heid, an' Ah widnae take it cause there wis this sheep's heid in it. (Letti Lyons 2001:008)

However, some less gruesome foodstuffs could be had as cheaply and made to keep longer and caused less of a problem when trying to convince the younger family members to eat them.

> She used tae hiv this wee barrel in the middle o' the floor ... an' it had ling fish in it, it wis salted an' we used tae get that an' porridge every mornin', every mornin'. (Letti Lyons SA2000:08)

Letti's 'sheep's heid' experience as a child didn't put her off continuing the traditional strategy of making soup for her own children and family when the time came. She made use of a different source for stock that was arguably not as nutritious, but nevertheless provided her with the means of offering a decent meal to her children.

> Ah used tae go in there [butchers] an' he kept me veal bones ... there wisnae much meat on them, but Ah used tae put them on for a pot o' soup for the weans. Ah mind wan day the doctor came in an he says, 'See if every mother wis like you'. Ah knew Ah had tae try and gie them something kind o' substantial. (Letti Lyons SA2001:008)

Families did not live exclusively off soups and stews, but foodstuffs that could be had cheaply and regularly were popular and those that were less regularly available had to be storable in some easy fashion, like Letti's grandmother's fish. Reliance on the perhaps less attractive but nevertheless nutritious and cheap fare from the slaughterhouse was also very common. As well as bones and sheeps' heads, working class mothers regularly purchased the other less desirable bits of the animal carcass for family consumption. However, it was often the case that the work involved in preparing this kind of food defeated the general aim of trying to minimise the time and effort involved in preparing family meals. But the cost of food determined where one went for foodstuffs and what type of meal was made. In poor times the difficult work involved in preparation had simply to be endured by the women.

> Ah've seen her [mother–in-law] strugglin' at the sink wi' the waater gushin' an' scrappin' awae for hours. First time Ah saw her, a didn't know whit it wis. It wis a coo's belly, tripe! She'd go tae the slaughterhouse an' gie them thruppence an' get this whole bag. Well, there wid be grass an' everything in it. Ye never tasted tripe like it, y'know whit Ah mean? The goodness wis there ... she wis great. (Letti Lyons SA2001:008)

It certainly cannot be said that working class women were without invention when it came to preparing and cooking food and contrary to popular belief at the time, although cheap, these foodstuffs were also nutritious.

3.1.1.3 The Coop Quarter

Luxury foodstuffs and other household luxuries were remembered as being bought only at the beginning of the Coop quarter when the usually strict attitudes to budget control were relaxed for a short period. At first glance the Cooperative offered an easy way to acquire the foodstuffs and other goods needed on a weekly basis through their credit and dividend system. However, on closer inspection we find that the groceries credit policy was different from that which governed the purchase of hardware and clothing and the like. Whilst these latter goods were paid for on a quarterly basis, food was paid for weekly.

> Ye got yer week's messages from week to week, but the first week of the quarter ye got messages all that week that didn't have to be paid for until the end o' the quarter. Every other week after that ye paid them at the end of the week, which meant that people went in and bought things that first week that they never bought, like dried fruit, fruit, chocolate biscuits, polish, extra coal tokens and things that they couldn't really afford. (Cathie Hagan SA1991:13)

Interestingly, Sarah Hagan recalls that her mother was a firm believer in the value of eating fruit regardless of the relative value to other necessities, and that she regularly put some of her precious Parish allowance towards fruit every week. However, the idea of a Parish-assisted woman buying fruit for her children on a weekly basis was such an outrageous one in the eyes of those around her that her belief had to be pursued as some sort of clandestine act to be carried out only in the safety of the house.

> My mother was great one for buying fruit for us, my sister and I, but she was on the Parish and oh, the idea ... whenever she would get her money on a Wednesday she would get apples and an orange, but she never allowed us to eat them outside ... because we were on the Parish. In case someone seen us and ...[says], 'Oh look they can eat apples', that's the God's truth. No way would she have allowed us outside the door with the fruit. We got our apple but we had to sit inside the house and eat it. She was a great one for the fruit but no way would

> we ever get on the street with it ... we were on the Parish and maybe we shouldn't have had that ... that's the kind of thing that happened. (Sarah Hagan SA2001:004)

The problem with running up a debt in the Cooperative for food which you weren't confident of being able to pay for at the end of the period was that you were possibly barring yourself from access to shopping at the beginning of the Coop quarter when it was absolutely essential. As well as affording people a week of unfettered shopping, the first week of the quarter was "poor week" because all outstanding debts on other items bought over the period had to be paid.

> That wis a great week because they felt they were getting in for nothin' until it came to the end of the quarter and they had to pay it and ye had tae pay this because when it came to the end of the quarter ye had tae be able to get yer shoppin' oot o' the Cooperative, so it had tae be paid otherwise ye wouldn't get any messages. (Cathie Hagan 1991:13)

Therefore, the ability to buy one's groceries from the Coop in this week was essential. It brought the ability to purchase some luxuries, but more importantly it provided a way of getting the necessities in what was traditionally a poor week.

3.1.2 Clothing: Commodity and Collateral

> Everybody had small debts 'cause ye couldn't go oot an' buy yersel' nothin', ye'd tae go intae these clubs ... the 'shillin' a week man' as they talk aboot. Ye wouldn't have had a rag only for it ... nobody could go oot an' buy anythin'. (Cassie Graham SA1998:10)

Compared to food and shelter, clothing was rather less of a priority for working class women trying to stretch a family budget. Nevertheless, it was an issue that had to be faced from time to time. Like food, there were ways of getting clothing on credit rather than having to find cash. The 'shillin' a week man', a travelling

salesman, usually from Glasgow, who peddled his wares round the streets and closes of Port Glasgow every Friday evening, was a popular way of acquiring clothes and many other household goods on credit. Of course, there were local shops that, if you were known, would allow you to accumulate a small debt for essentials like food and some items of clothing. But the best and biggest source of credit for acquiring clothes, as with food and just about everything else, was the Cooperative Society.

3.1.2.1 The Cooperative

> Everybody in this town bought out the Cooperative, that's for sure. After the turn of the leaf, the next day when the new quarter began every shop wis queued from 8 o' clock in the mornin'. An' when ye got intae that shop there wis maybe a counter for drapery and a counter for gents clothing, a counter for ladies clothing, millenary, every different kind o' thing. Every counter wis queued out the door waitin' for their things at the beginnin' o' the quarter. That's how important it wis in the Port. (Cathie Hagan SA1991:13)

People would depend on their 'black book' at the Coop to allow them to buy clothes at the beginning of the quarter and pay for them at the end. As with the purchase of foodstuffs, what was bought in the first week of the new quarter did not have to be paid until the end of the quarter. Consequently, the first week had the potential to be a bit of a shopping frenzy for those who desperately needed a number of items. The problems arose at the end of the quarter when the Coop recalled their credit.

> Ye hadn't got what is commonly called hire purchase in them days, that mostly started after the War. In them days the only way, or the easiest way, for people to get debt was tae use this Coop book ... and, of course, for most people it became a way of livin'. Ye mounted up a certain amount o' debt, ye tried tae get it paid by the end o' the quarter. If ye were lucky enough to be able to pay it then ye had the [Coop] dividend that came along wi' it ... in fact, there wis some people that couldn't [pay the debt] and it became a big worry. Say Ah run up a big debt and at the end o' the quarter Ah couldn't pay that,

> then ye got no dividend, because ye still owed them that ... but they would take the book awae so that ye couldn't get anymore and that wis a big threat tae people in them days 'cause they couldn't live without it. (Hugo Hagan SA1991:13)

It is perhaps true that credit for clothing acquired through the Coop book was easier to control because the need for clothes was not as immediate as that for food. However, clothes were, of course, more expensive than food. Whilst many people faced problems trying to clear their book at the quarter's end, the problems could be exacerbated if a friend or neighbour who benefited from credit on your book was also finding it difficult to pay. However, lending one's book to others was not uncommon.

> It wisn't everybody that could pay it, it wis very hard for some people. If you let somebody else get something on yer book and they couldn't pay it ... no means o' payin' it, sometimes the people that owned the book had tae pay it for them and then wait for them tae pay it back. That wis why ye tried tae keep yer black book for yer own family. But, maybe somebody wid come tae yer door an' say their wee boy or their wee girl wis makin' their First Communion and they were in dire straits and couldn't buy anything for them. Ye would more or less hiv tae gie them yer book tae help them oot, but ye would go wae them so that they wouldn't go over the score and ye would get just exactly what that wean needed. And just hope they had enough money to pay you at the end o' the quarter ... ye had tae watch, but if somebody came tae yer door and ye knew it wis a genuine case ye wid help them oot. (Cathie Hagan SA1991:13)

This is a perfect example of why Cassie Graham and many of her contemporaries attached so much importance to the strategy of remaining close to one's network of family and friends. The ability to rely on one's family, neighbour or friend for assistance was crucial to their survival, as it was for many working class people. Benson (1989:128) talks about kinship ties being reinforced by the very resilience of the extended family where relatives remained in contact as often as possible and

where mothers and daughters maintained the strongest bond. Others concluded that blood ties were stronger than considerations inspired by social class and that cooperation between relatives in major and minor matters of everyday life were continuous (Williams 1956:84).

However, the system of loaning one's Cooperative book to family or friends could be open to abuse. Whilst it was not uncommon for someone, having received access to a friend's or relative's Coop book, to renege on repayment out of dire personal circumstances, there were others who took the chance on bad debtors in order to benefit from the potentially huge dividend accumulating on their frequently used book.

> Some people had as many as 30 or 40 people on their book, but then they had all that worry of people maybe no' payin' ye ... people actually made money from it. Y'know, if you had maybe 20 people using your book, then at then end o' the quarter you were getting' dividend for 20 people. Now, if you were getting say in them days maybe two pound a person, well ye were talking aboot quite a we bit o' money every quarter and therefore that money would mount up. Now, maybe the person that owned the book didn't need tae use that, then at the end o' the year they would have quite a bit o' money lyin' in that book. (Cathie& Hugo Hagan SA1991:13)

However, abuse of the Coop book was not restricted to those who saw the potential and could afford to bankroll the multiple use of its credit facility. Individuals battling against poverty conditions abused the Coop book system by acquiring clothing at the beginning of the quarter with no intention of wearing them but pawning them on for the immediate cash advantage.

> They used tae go an' get a lot o' claes oot at the beginnin' o' the quarter an' then pawn it an' then when it came tae the end o' the quarter they'd tae pay aw that. Stupid it wis, murder it wis. (Bessie O'Neil SA2001:011)

3.1.2.2 Self-Help Provision

The purchase of clothing was important but it may have come some way down the list of a working class mother's priorities, and in any case other strategies for the provision of family clothes were often found. These included mending clothes and making new clothes from whatever material could be had.

> When we were young we had tae sit an' darn socks, and darn stockings and patch, learn tae patch things. If ye got a hole in something ye got a patch o' cloth the same an' ye had tae set it in an' patch it all. Many's a wan had patches behind their trousers ... young lassies cannie dae that noo. ... ma mother knitted socks all the time, they [the men] needed socks for their working boots. (Agnes Mulholland SA2001:002)

Contrary to the norm, Letti Lyons learned her skills in one area of clothing self-sufficiency from her grandfather. Reminiscent of the trade that formed the backbone of the early economy on the Clyde's lower reaches, Letti's grandfather was a fisherman. Skilled in mending and making nets, he was also an able knitter. He saw the usefulness in transferring this skill to Letti.

> Ma granda learnt me how tae knit. He wis an oul' fisherman an' he'd sit me on a wee brass stool, that's when Ah stayed wi' them before Ah went back tae ma mammy, an' he used tae say, 'and over, through, off, and over, through, off ...' Y'know, that wis the [nets] ... Oh, he learnt me tae knit alright. In them days wool wis cheap. Used tae get a hank or half a hank or cuts that were aw different sizes ... Ah knit for the weans when Ah wis older, but when Ah wis young Ah knitted aw the tammies an' scarves. (Letti Lyons SA2001:008)

While knitting and making one's own clothes was a common practice and one which was assisted by inexpensive material costs, there were other means of gathering the materials necessary for this system of self-sufficiency. And the ingenuity for self-made goods did not end with clothing. Some fairly ambitious

household fittings were made with these bits and pieces that were picked up from wherever possible.

> Aye, ma grannie made clothes, so did ma mother, but ma grannie done an awful lot o' knittin', an she crocheted, done a lot o' crochetin' tae, she used tae crochet all her own curtains ... at that time there wis wans workin' in the mill at the winding an' they got the cotton, ma uncle John's wife worked mostly at that an' she would steal it an' gie it tae her an' that's whit she made the curtains wi'. They were beautiful, they really were beautiful ... she put patterns in them y'know, she done a quair lot o' work at them ... and she wid make a bedspread an' all tae match them. (Cassie Kane SA1997:22)

A great deal of the patterns and designs sewn and worked into the self-made clothes and furnishings were also self made, but many of them were copied from patterns seen or remembered from elsewhere. The priorities that women set for spending their money did not include luxuries like knitting patterns and design templates. But, in the same way as strategies were invented to deal with the provision of food, so some women cultivated the skills to allow for the replication of studied and treasured decorations or motifs.

> My mum would sit at night and crochet ... she would go down to the church and at that time the altar lace was very deep [elaborate] on the altar cloths, you don't see it so much nowadays. My mother could go down and sit on the front seat and copy that design of lace work [from memory]. She hadn't the money to buy books or patterns and that shop at the top of John Wood Street, which was MacIntosh's then, used to have a window with all the crochet books on it. I went up with her and she would stand at that window and look at it and she would come home and do that. (Sarah Hagan SA2001:004)

3.1.2.3 The Parish

Not every family had the skills or the means to produce their own clothes or to access credit to buy new clothes. Many of the poorer families depended on Parish

assistance to get clothing for their children to attend school in the proper attire. Sarah Hagan recalls above how her mother's determination to provide her and her sister with fruit bought with a parish allowance was done secretly for fear of being accused of wasting Parish money. Those who had recourse to the Parish for clothing often experienced the same watchful gaze, especially when those in authority thought they had reason to suspect someone of abusing the system.

> When we went tae school we used tae get school boots 'cause ma mother an' father couldn't afford tae buy us shoes ... an' the leather wis that thick y'know, skint all yer heels, an' ma mother bought me a pair o' sandshoes. An' Ah remember goin' tae school an' the teacher sayin', 'Where's yer boots, yer school boots?' Ah says, 'Ah couldn't wear them, they're skinnin' ma heels', backs o' ma heels wir raw, raw flesh. She sent me up tae the doctor right awae tae get examined tae make sure Ah wisnae scaimmin' [pretending] ... Ah wis in Clune Park School an ye went tae Jean Street School tae get yir boots an' ye got a jumper n'all ... an' my God they were hard ... ye got socks and they were thick an' the boots wir that heavy Ah couldnie wear them at all, the jumpers wurnie bad ... Ah wore sandshoes all the time at school, summer an' winter, it wis nae joke, they wir hard days. (Jim Renfrew SA2001:003)

The teacher's concern would be for the fate of the boots that had been given to Jim. If he wasn't wearing them, then where were they? Had they been given to someone else, had they simply been discarded or had they been sold or pawed to gain some money from them? Pawing one's valuables was a very common way of raising cash to see the family through the week in food and other essentials, but it was an avenue of disposal that was closed to clothing supplied by the Parish.

> Ye'd tae go tae 'Chocolate Johnnie' [so called because he sold chocolate at the local football ground on a Saturday] if ye were in dire poverty and starvation an' ye'd a got two shillin' for each wean, the Parish. And, ye would've got a pair o' boots ... wi' stamps stamped on them so ye couldn't pawn them, an' it wisnae on the inside it wis on the outside. (Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

For Cassie the mark of the Parish was a public display of poverty. It was a sign to the whole community that you were unable to provide for your own family. In fact, the boots and the other items of clothing supplied by the Parish were immediately distinguishable by their design and colour and, as those who wore them say, by their rigidity. The fact that they carried a stamp was almost insignificant from the point of view of the personal dignity of the wearer.

3.1.2.4 The Pawnshop

> Most people pawned in them days ... had tae! Well, ye pawned on a Monday mornin' ... wans had tae dae it every week tae get food ... it wid be pawned on a Monday and that would run them in money until they got their pay at the weekend ... they [shipyard workers] worked up tae dinner time on a Saturday in them days an' they got their clothes out the pawn and wore them Saturday, Sunday and then they went back in on a Monday mornin' again ... they pawned their clothes and everything, pawned their clothes, boots, underwear, everything. (Cassie Graham SA1990:14)

Significantly, although it was invariably the men's clothes that went to the pawn because it was only at the weekend that the better clothes were required, it was the women who organised the trip to the pawn with the clothes or whatever else could be used as collateral. Even today those men who knew the system speak about its organisation as a totally female practice.

> Women used to pawn their men's suits. Put it in on a Monday and take it out on a Saturday to wear to mass on Sunday and then it would go back in again on a Monday. (Harry Mulholland SA2001:002)

Such was the ritual among men of only wearing their suit or best clothes on a weekend, and especially a Sunday, that many women felt able to establish a routine of pawning their husband's clothes every Monday and reclaim them the following

Saturday without their knowledge. Although Roberts (1984:149) found that in inter-war Preston, at least, a combination of established attitudes about respectability and the success of other female strategies led to the pawnshop being a last resort strategy, in Port Glasgow it appears that some women were able to make use of the pawn without even the owner of the pawned goods knowing that it had taken place. Assuming this to be true, then any predictions about the level of business going through the pawn would have to be considered speculative, to say the least.

However, it is certainly true that it was not every wife or mother who considered it a good or respectable way to raise cash. In fact, some women considered it a measure of one's lack of respectability to be seen near the pawnbrokers. Letti Lyons was convinced of the necessity to pawn her husband's suit soon after they were married to help her mother, but this met with strong resistance from his mother who regarded the situation differently.

> Eftir Ah got married ma man had a good suit ... but he never wore it except on a Sunday going to Chapel an' ma maw says 'Ah'm in a pickle o' bother' she says 'lend me Jim's suit an' Ah'll gie ye two shillin's ... well, a loaf wis three and ha'pence or somethin', know whit Ah mean, ye could live on two shillin's ... but that wis soon hit on the heid 'cause his mother found out about it an' pit her foot down. That wis *his* suit goin' tae the pawn an' she didn't want that. (Letti Lyons SA2001:008)

A week or two of unemployment or a family dependent on the offerings of an alcoholic 'breadwinner' were circumstances that would make recourse to credit facilities inevitable and the pawn was a major contender for this business. Even those Port women who might consider their dignity or respectability tarnished by a trip to the pawn were occasionally driven by circumstances to make use of the

service. But, like those women in other inter-war industrial towns who were concerned for their reputations, rather than risk their respectability they would take advantage of the agent service established by entrepreneurial women in the town.

> If you didn't want to be seen goin' intae the pawn there was always an agent that would take the bundle for ye ... get a commission for it. (Harry Mulholland SA2001:002)

These agents were normally women who recognised that they were able to exploit their own strength of personality and acute negotiation skills to haggle with the pawnbroker and win a better price for the person offering their goods for cash credit. Of course, the agent's price was built into the deal and their commission was subtracted from the price eventually agreed.

> Then, of course, ye had Mary Tennison up in the pawn in Church Street ... she used tae pawn for everybody, she knew whit Ah wis pawnin', whit you were pawnin', whit everybody wis pawnin', 'cause she took the bundles aff ye and pawned them fur ye ..... she sat there [at home] and she wis surrounded, that's no' exaggeration. Ah min' Ah wis in Saint John's school and we used tae go up tae see Mary Tennison an' she wis surrounded wi' bundles. The people used tae come up and say, 'Mary will ye pawn this', and ask for so much. An' Mary wis sittin' there an' she took tuppence or thruppence a bundle, she took somethin' aff everybody fur pawnin yer stuff ... Aye, she could work it wi' Dan, the man in the pawn. He wid be sayin', 'Ah'll gie ye so much' and Mary'd be sayin' 'Now, c'mere Dan' and she wid haggle wi' him. Where you wouldn't haggle, you wid jist accept ... so, she done it that way fur ye, an' she took her cut. (Bessie O'Neil & Emi Donnelly SA2001:011)

The pawnbroker took more than just bags of clothes and good suits across his counter, but the items which were more precious and therefore more valuable were more difficult to retrieve when the time came. Non-retrieval within the allotted time meant the item defaulted to the broker and was put up for sale. Sadly, the circumstances that brought about the need to pawn often prevailed and many family

heirlooms and items of deep sentimental and personal value were left on the broker's shelf with no chance of reclamation.

> Look at the stuff he had in that shop, gold and everything, gold rings ... People had pawned them and couldn't [retrieve] them again. People pawned their very wedding rings. It was terrible sad, right enough. Poor people, poor, poor days it wis. (Bessie O'Neil SA2001:011)

The pawn was one strategy for survival and a critical part of the manoeuvring and scheming that Port women perfected during hard times to help make ends meet. It was as important as the Coop book and, like the latter, it was central to the traditional strategies women drew on to assist the family budget and to provide for the day-to-day running of the home.

> They were a good thing in a way, anybody that had any valuables tae pawn ... men wore gold Alberts in they days, know the watch an' chain. Well, anybody that had wan o' them wid maybe've lent it tae ye tae pawn tae make up yer Coop money, [end of quarter] an' then ye took it oot the following week when ye got some more money. (Cassie Graham SA1990:114)

Cassie Graham's recollection of the pawnshop provides us with a beautifully composite example of how critical the links were between the various limbs of the body of assistance women depended on. The pawn, the Coop and dependency on friends, relatives and neighbours all frequently combined to save the day for many working class women struggling to manage a meagre income.

Every working class family in 1930s Port Glasgow was familiar with the strategies outlined above as a means of making ends meet. Families were more or less dependent upon them, and everyone was aware of them. Such was the importance of these systems and strategies for the survival of many families in inter-war Port Glasgow that young women entering into marriage had to ask themselves what kind of access they were

likely to have to those family members and local systems, like the pawnshop, after their marriage. Cassie Graham's and Margaret O'Donoghue's experiences recounted below provide us with a good example of how two young women growing up in the Port at this time derived different answers to this question because of their family circumstances and the strategies they grew up with. They consequently had a different attitude to post-marital dependency on their mothers and the area they grew up in and the traditional strategies of the family, which impinged upon their decision for married accommodation.

3.2 Strategies and Where to Live: Two Women's Experiences

3.2.1 Cassie Graham: George Street and the Bay Area

As we heard above, Cassie refused the house offered to her soon after marriage in the Glasgow Road area. She chose to remain in her cramped rented room in the town centre close to her mother, neighbours, family and friends because it would afford her immediate access to the necessary social networks.

> Ah lived in the town among ma own people, because we never had tae ask strangers for anything ... we had poor days like everybody else but there was always family or friends tae help ye oot, help each other ... if ye ran short o' somethin' ... yer own family, sisters, brothers, ma maw, would help ye out, we all helped each other. (Cassie Graham SA1990:14)

She also knew that developing the skills and experience needed to manage household strategies would gain her the respect of her peers and elders in the neighbourhood. This way she would develop her own creditworthiness and respectability. Earning the respect of the elder women in the neighbourhood was critical because just as Willmott and

Young point out (1957:49-61) in mid twentieth century Bethnal Green, the place of the mother was so important and their daughters' dependency was such that they determined to remain within close proximity after marriage. The mother, they concluded, was still "the head and centre of the extended family." So, on the one hand Cassie laments the lack of good and sufficient housing in the town area, while on the other she refused a house not so far from the town centre because she feared she would be severing important links by doing so. And her experience of managing the family income, even when her husband was in employment, certainly confirmed for her the wisdom of her earlier decision to reject the Glasgow Road offer.

> Ah used tae keep a budget ... and Ah darnie ... go above it because if ye hid ye'd be starvin' before the end o' the week ... Oot o' that twenty nine shillin's [State benefit], ye'd tae pay five shillin's for the room an' wan an' six for a bag o' coal ... and when ye paid gas money and society money and tick n' different things ye'd nothing left tae feed ye ... bloody terrible; mibe buy half a pound o' mince ... Ah've seen me sittin' on a Saturday night havin' got ma pay at dinner time, not a penny piece left. Hiv' tae go an' borrow aff ma maw for the next week. (Cassie Graham SA1998:10)

In fact the house in Glasgow Road was no more than a fifteen-minute walk away from the town and it had shops close by. Although they could not compete with the range available in the town centre, general provisions were available. However, Cassie was not familiar with the area or the shops. Not only would her name carry no weight out there, but her mother, too, was unquoted in the Glasgow Road area as far as credit was concerned.

She also knew that the Glasgow Road house was out of the question because the rent was considerably higher than what she was paying in her room. The rent in a Glasgow Road room and kitchen was ten shillings per week, which was double what Cassie was

required to pay in her room in Sandringham. When Neil was employed he could earn three pounds per week, which would have been ample to sustain the family in a Glasgow Road house, but Cassie never got everything Neil earned when he was in work, and in fact he was more often out of work than in it. There were occasions when even though he had work, there was no wage earned.

> Big Neillie an' the squad were workin' ... n' they hid the job screwed-up and they're waitin' tae get a start on it, then it rained for six solid weeks ... him an' the rest o' the squad never struck a blow. No money nowhere. (Cassie Graham SA1990:115)

Cassie had no income to budget with because the dole and parish refused Neil benefit on the premise that he actually had a job. Anticipating such circumstances and the inevitable beginning of a family soon after marriage, the very thought of being removed from familiar surroundings was alarming.

Cassie remained in her rented room but she continued to pursue a home of her own in the town centre. Her quest was a difficult one because, while the Port's population was increasing, little or no new housing was being erected and some of the houses in the town centre were old and of poor quality. Nevertheless, undaunted by the prospect of a long wait for a house, Cassie actively pursued the factor to allocate her a house in the town. She took the only route open to her and visited the factor's office as regularly as she thought wise in the hope that a vacancy would coincide with one of her visits. But she did not relish her trips to the factor's office.

3.2.1.1 The Unbending Factor: Fact or Fiction?

> Ye went intae the factor's office, Brodie wis the factor for the Bay Area ... ye went intae the office and ask tae see a ... there wis a Miss Gemmell and a man ...

> an' ye were treated like bloody dirt, an' Ah went in there every week tae, they were sick o' the sight o' me. (Cassie Graham 1998:09)

Brodie's of Princes Street was the largest factor in Port Glasgow in this period. The firm was responsible for most of the town centre housing, including the increasingly more crowded but relatively new Bay Area. The office clerks, who had the unenviable task of dealing with the queues of folk who each day beat a trail to the office counter with impassioned pleas for a house, were thought to be all-powerful and were often lambasted for their seemingly unflinching attitude to the rules. But, it was felt by some of those on the receiving end of the factor's rulebook that there appeared to be endless scope for interpreting the rules to suit the circumstances. Certainly, Miss Gemmell's application of the rules appears to have left this impression not only on Cassie Graham's memory.

> Miss Gemmell we had tae go tae ... Ah don't know how they got a hoose aff her, Ah think they had tae wait years ... she made up all her own rules, y'know ... Jist whitever way she was feeling, whether ye'd a got a hoose or no. If she didn't want tae gie ye a hoose ye wouldn't a got it. (Cathie Hagan SA1998:09)

Stories concerning factors are legendary, few of them complimentary, and by local Port accounts Brodie's office differed little. The job of making decisions about who was to fall heir to a vacant house when many eagerly awaited the decision did not make the factor a popular person. Anecdotes abound regarding the redoubtable Miss Gemmell, and everyone has their own account of her high-handed manner.

> She wis the heed wuman in the office, cheeky aul' bitch she wis. She never married y'know ... [I] hated her. [She] cut ye aff like a dog ... 'Nothing! Nothing!' she would shout, wouldn't even say, 'I'll keep ye in mind' or be nice tae ye about it. (Cassie Graham SA1998:10)

These stories serve to tell the impersonal nature of housing issues as much, if not

more, than the dispassionate leanings of the administrator. To fall foul of the factor could mean banishment to the back of a seemingly endless queue where people for no good reason and less eligible than you could claim a house before their turn.

> When Ah thought o' some o' the wans that got houses, they wouldn't bloody pay their rent and Ah'd paid ... Ah never missed ma rent in ma life. (Cassie Graham SA1998:09)

Factors and their agents were in fact known to deviate from the rulebook on occasions when, it has to be assumed, it suited them, which would perhaps explain Cassie's understanding that some who were less deserving got houses before her. However, it would appear from Cassie's own testimony that she too benefited from someone's ability to influence the factor in her favour. After three years in her rented room, which was becoming more cramped as each year brought a new addition to the family, Cassie was driven into making a desperate attempt to force the factor to award her a house. But, it was only after the failure of the plan and Cassie's suffering the acute embarrassment and feeling of complete hopelessness it brought, that her pleas were finally answered. The plan was conceived when a friend of Cassie's was handing the keys of a house in George Street back to the factor and informed Cassie. They immediately saw a way to outsmart the factor and force Brodie's to allocate a house the Cassie.

> She met me an' she says, 'are ye still lookin' for a house?' Ah says 'aye'. She says, 'well, Ah've got the keys o' a hoose an' Ah'm no' takin' it.' She says, 'you come wi' me when Ah go tae hand in the keys an' he [factor] cannie say it's set [booked] if he's jist got the keys in his hand', but he did ... Ah says 'whit aboot gien' me that hoose?' ... '*I have somebody for that house!*' It wis the attitude. Ah cried when Ah came oot. Ah wis that cut Ah cried ... treated ye like a dog. (Cassie Graham SA1998:09)

Nevertheless, the following morning Cassie was contacted by the factor's office to

confirm she had been awarded the house in George Street. Cassie believes it may have been that a local Bay Area woman who had influence over the factor intervened in her favour to secure the house for Cassie.

> The next mornin' Ah went over tae the baths tae dae a waashin', min' the auld steamie? ... an' he (factor) sent the keys over tae me. His secretary walked intae ma maw's ... he must have had second thoughts or McAllister had words wi' him ... well, he'd get his tea in there [Mrs McAllister's house] in the mornin' and a good yarn, plenty o' gossip Ah suppose ... an' no' only her hoose, but two or three more he used tae go tae. But, that wis the way ye got a hoose, treated ye like a dog. Ye had tae have somebody tae speak for ye before ye got a house. (Cassie Graham SA1998:09)

Mrs McAllister had influence over the allocation of housing because she befriended the factor's agent who came round the streets collecting unpaid rent. Significantly, he was there to collect rent arrears and not rent per se. Rent payments were supposed to be made at the factor's office weekly. The fact that he made a point of regularly taking tea with Mrs McAllister, and that he received the same hospitality at other houses, suggests that he had something to gain from this diversion from duty and that there was perhaps more to his regular visits to these houses in the Bay Area. His visits to Mrs McAllister and others may have been more of a business transaction.

> The only wan that could really get houses for ye, they say she could gie them [factor's agent] a backhander, was ... oul' Flood. She stayed in the Bay and she'd a' got anybody ... but ye had tae gie her a backhander ... oul' McAllister wis another wan, the two o' them lived up the wan close. They were that well in wi' the [agent] they widda got ye a house. (Cassie Kane SA1998:11)

Other testimony to these visits alludes to an arrangement that I believe had more to do with the exchange of information which, if true, would confirm how important and influential people like McAllister and Flood really were.

> Oul' Flood had a Coop book and she lent oot this book tae half the town and that's how everybody got great [friendly] wi' her and that's how she would get them all a house. (Cassie Kane SA1998:11)

Why would being a lender of a Coop book give one influence with the factor in coming to a decision over who should be allocated a house? I believe it is because the book lender had useful and creditable knowledge about who in their experience was a trustworthy payer and who was not. Lending one's Coop book was to all intents and purposes money lending. But, instead of reaping benefit in the form of a cash interest payment on a loan, the Coop book lender reaped a high dividend at the end of the quarter. McAllister and Flood probably knew more than some husbands about how their wives managed the household income to make ends meet. Ayers and Lambertz (1986:195-219) explored this topic in their Liverpool study and found that depending on the nature of the strategy being employed by mothers to assist the family budget, husbands would be more or less informed. Strategies that involved taking in lodgers or going out to work were considered respectable, but those that involved entering into debt may not be so acceptable.

Certainly, those offering to loan their Coop book to would make it their business to know something about those wishing to purchase goods on it and they would obviously have good information to pass on about a client's ability and inclination to pay when the time came. Factors, like moneylenders, could only afford a limited number of bad payers on their books and would not be averse to taking advice on a potential client. They would listen to those in the know when they were being given the name of a potential tenant of the next available property for their job involved knowing as much about the

client as possible. McGuckin (1992:217) reminds us that "when in debt the mechanisms for social control are explicit. The women felt the force of these through the factors and housing visitors. The tenant/factor relationship went well beyond rent collecting. The most intimate private details of these families' lives were recorded and their moral character assessed by these officials. Such information could be passed to employers, teachers and other factors on request."

3.2.2 Margaret O'Donaghue: Honeymoon Terrace to The Glen

For some women, marriage heralded a once and for all shift away from the family home. Whereas Cassie Graham refused to consider any house that would take her too far away from her family circle, Margaret's decision was to take a house at the other end of the town from her family.

> Six months before Ah got married, a house came up ... It was in Inchgreen Street, top flat ... a room 'n kitchen, outside lavvie. But it was a good lavvie because it wis only me and another woman ... that shared this, an' it was clean! (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1998:09)

Margaret's situation was unusual in many ways. Not only was she starting her married life in her own home; her home was to be a room and kitchen as opposed to the cramped conditions of a single end or, worse still, the confinement of a rented room. And she was in the almost unheard-of position of having been offered her new home six months before her wedding. Margaret's decision to accept a move that would never have been considered by Cassie Graham arose out of a combination of her and her husband-to-be's family circumstances.

3.2.2.1 Mills for the Girls and Shipyards for the Men

Margaret arrived in Port Glasgow in 1912 as a small child from Hamilton where her father, Jimmie Hanratta, had been a colliery labourer. Her brother Jimmie had moved to the Port some three years earlier to take up a job as a dental mechanic, and it was at his request that the family arrived in Port Glasgow.

> Ah think he was fed up wi' digs. He craiped and craiped at ma mother tae come doon, he says 'there's mills here for the girls and shipyards for the men.' (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1997:20)

Coaxed by Jimmie's enthusiasm about the work situation, the family decided to move. Margaret's father arrived earlier, full of apprehension, in an attempt to secure a place to live. Port Glasgow did indeed have attractions in 1912. Its busy shipbuilding industry sustained numerous auxiliary businesses, and there was Birkmyre's Mill, which depended largely on female labour. But a move to Port Glasgow also held many fears for Mr Hanratta and his young family, not least the one where they were going to live.

We must assume that in Hamilton they were familiar with the various methods of acquiring a house and that they had family connections to assist them. In Port Glasgow they knew no one; they were not quoted in the credit-system and their respectability was an unknown quantity. They were complete strangers, incomers in a town which operated on a word-of-mouth, personal basis. How were they to survive in Port Glasgow and how were Mr Hanratta's hopes of securing a house to be fulfilled? Incomers were not considered to be in a good position to procure a house.

> Ah don't know how they would have got a house ... They wid miby've got a room in somebody's hoose ... but Ah don't know how they would've got a hoose. (Cathie Hagan SA1998:09)

Obviously, locals came first, as far as the locals were concerned. Yet, Margaret tells how, on his arrival at Brodie's office, her father was handed two sets of keys to chose the house he wanted.

> Ma father came down wi' oor Jimmie ... an' went intae Brodie's ... an' they explained ... an' of course oor Jimmie explained that he was a dental mechanic, he wasn't an ordinary ... He wasn't being snobby, but it was a job they [the factor] would be sure of gettin' their rent. They handed ma father two keys ... one was for out the Glasgow Road, Carnegie Park Gardens, an' the other wan wis fur Clune Brae. (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1998:09)

Apparently, incomers looking for a house were not as handicapped as some may have thought by having no historical family lineage in the town. However, Margaret's family were not completely without resources. Her brother Jimmie had, after all, been resident for three years already, and it is obvious from Margaret's recollection that it was in fact Jimmie who got offered the house, and not her father. His income and social standing as a dental mechanic contributed greatly to the factor's apparent generosity. And of course Jimmie's employer could add a weighty reference to his application for a house. With Jimmie in one of his properties, the factor could feel confident of regular and prompt payment of rent. The factor was a businessman and his first and foremost interest was in regular and prompt payment and not, necessarily, about who was next in line for a house.

> In them days it wisnae so much what ye knew, as who ye knew ... there wisnae so many council houses built ... Ah lived in Newark Street in Johnnie Burns's properties. Ah wis workin' at the time as a plater, an' Ah think he says, "Oh well, this man will be steady for payin' his rent anyway", so Ah got this house before somebody else. (John Waddell SA200:009)

Jimmie Hanratta relied on his respectable job and the word of his employer. Indeed, Jimmie's good job and reputation was to be a vital factor in the survival of the Hanratta

family in the town, and his ability to make ends meet for the family came into play very soon after the family arrived in Port Glasgow.

> Ah wis jist two and a half [when her father died] an' ma mother was left. But then again ... oor Jimmie intae the breach. He had good money an' a good pay an' he wis only twenty. Well, he took on the mantle o' a father ... In them days if it hadn't been for oor Jimmie, ma mother would have been sunk. (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1998:09)

Margaret reveals here the essence and somewhat precarious nature of her family's survival system. Without Jimmie and his 'good money' they would be facing destitution because her mother 'knew' nobody in the Port. A year in the town had not produced a network of good resources and friends whom she could rely on in hard times. The Hanrattas were not by any stretch of the imagination well off, but Jimmie's constant employment and better than average wage meant that there was little recourse to prospective creditors, at least not for crucial matters or on a long-term or regular basis. We must not assume that neighbourly relations were not cultivated and that useful connections were spurned in favour of complete independence, but it was financial security that allowed them the luxury of renting home in an area where self-sufficiency was the norm.

3.2.2.2 Respectability

Mrs Hanratta's Clune Brae home on the periphery of the town centre was situated in a less congested area and was a healthier place in which to live, but it attracted a higher rent. Margaret's neighbours were more financially independent than Cassie Graham's were in George Street and the Bay Area. Honeymoon Terrace was not traditionally associated with the survival strategies of the poorer families. Rather, it was linked to

affluence because the tenements afforded each family a toilet inside the house and because influential people had lived there.

> See Clune Brae, especially Honeymoon Terrace up near the tap where we wur, ye were supposed to be a toff. Know why? Because there were lavatories in the house, the middle o' the town there were no lavvies ... even Bowie the head banker lived there [Honeymoon Terrace]. (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1998:09)

The Clune Brae tenements "near the top" [although Margaret's family were not as "near the top" as Bowie] (cf. Appendix Figure 27) were not as public as those of the town. Life was a bit more private without being anything like anonymous. The neighbours were neighbourly and supportive, but the measure of one's respectability was set beyond having a clear rent book. Respectability in Honeymoon Terrace started with a firm notion of being considered a "toff" by the town dwellers. You were a "toff" because your toilet was inside the house and was used only by one family; because your house had a scullery where you could bathe (relatively) in private; because your close was more salubrious and less public than the town closes; because your rent was higher; because you didn't live in the crowded dens that were the Bay Area; and because people like Bowie, the banker, lived in the vicinity.

Margaret did not consider herself better than anyone else; she might have considered herself luckier than some. But, the context set the standards. Growing up in Honeymoon Terrace conditioned her for life there and not in the Bay Area. When Margaret and her sisters, Jane and Mary, were preparing to enter work, there was no question of them becoming just another 'mill hairy'.

> Oor Jane wis cryin' ... 'Oh,' she says, 'Mary, we're no' used tae that!' ... Jane wisnae stuck-up ... but she liked respectability. (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1998:09)

One cannot blame the Hanrattas for fearing the possibility of working in some of the more dirty and heavy jobs in Birkmyre's Mill. Not everyone was lucky enough to escape these jobs. One job in particular was especially heavy and dirty, which made it visibly unhealthy.

> Ah worked nightshift in the ropework flat, started at ten o' clock at night and knocked aff at seven in the mornin', an' ye knocked aff at quarter past wan until two o' clock fur wir dinner. It wis heavy goin'. The tow [raw material for ropes] all went intae whit they called boxes ... there were these big machines an' the rope came oot and it piled up an' it wis thick, thick, thick wi' oil, heavy oil haudin' it all thegither. An' you'd a big steel cleet an' you'd tae haul they things an' they were bloody heavy, pull them along tae the next part o' the [process]. It went through a frame an' through rollers and intae empty metal cans. We aw hid big bloody oil boils aff it. It wis thick orange coloured oil an' it wid stick the tow thegethir, it wid come in in bales an' them that worked at the teasin' opened it up ... big clippers tae cut the wires tae get the hemp oot an ye put it on a conveyor belt, the teasin' machine an' this oil wis pourin doon oot o' it. It brought ye oot in great big boils all over yer arms and hands and everythin' an' they were horrible. Ye went doon tae the ambulance room when they burst an' if yer heid wis hingin' aff they widda put iodine on it. (Jessie Rorrison SA2001:006)

The prospect of working with the raw materials was too much for Jane and she pleaded for a job in a more respectable flat (cf. Appendix Figure 28). Her impassioned appeal to the mill foreman, augmented by some experience gained in a small tea-towel factory in Lanarkshire, met with success and she won a job for herself and her sister Mary at the weaving, the most respectable of mill jobs.

Margaret maintains that her mother's almost puritan outlook was the reason for her sister's determination not to become a 'hairy'. No doubt this had a significant effect upon her young mind. However, the respectability which Honeymoon Terrace attracted had a more significant influence which touched all its inhabitants. In fact, there was a large element of overlap between what Margaret thought endeared her mother to her

neighbours and the vein of respectability functioning in Honeymoon Terrace tenements generally. Mrs Hanratta's "puritan" concerns about many of the trends of the day - public dancing, street music, close courting, cinema-going and the younger generation's growing enthusiasm for things American - fitted in exactly with the public views of her neighbours. In particular, Mr Downly, who apparently "wis ful o' his own importance", held Margaret's mother in great esteem because despite the contagious nature of close gossip-mongering she managed, in his opinion, to remain unaffected.

> She looks neither tae the left nor ... the right an' she minds her ain bloody business. (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1998:09)

Of course, this could as well be the assertion of a disenfranchised male inhabitant who, being divorced from the female nature of the close, saw an ally in the one woman who maintained a respectable distance from the close matriarchy. It could also serve to characterise the important difference between the beehive-like existence in town tenements and the slightly less personal Honeymoon Terrace. For those living in the town tenements, minding your own business was impossible. In the Bay Area, for example, streets were longer and tenements larger than in most other places. Most of the Bay Area houses were two apartment dwellings, some were only single apartments, yet, nearly all of them were occupied by large families.

> Aw workin' class people. Ninety families [George Street] an' families were ten an' twelve tae a family, even in single ends! (Cassie Graham SA1998:10)

Many of these households were swollen by the respectable strategy of taking in a single lodger or another family. Trying to account for the extent of taking in lodgers is almost impossible because some lodgers were family members who paid no rent and did

not regard themselves as lodgers, rather as family. Also, the census returns did not consider single status lodgers, but only families lodging[4]. Roberts (1986:233) found that "taking in lodgers who were strangers was not all that usual ... on the other hand very many women had relatives living with them ... it was much easier to get a relation to share a family bedroom, indeed a bed, than a stranger." Nevertheless, in difficult economic circumstances any form of income would be viewed as welcome, and strangers formed a significant part of some Port respondents reminiscence as lodgers in working class households.

> Next door tae us in John Wood Street ... McMillan ye called him an' he had two or three o' a family at that time ... an' the took in lodgers, in a room an' kitchen and an outside toilet, an' they took lodgers in. It wis a wuman an' Ah don't know if she had a man, an' three weans came tae live in it, in the room. But, that wis a common thing lettin' yer room oot tae somebody 'cause the folk had no money to pay the rent ... ye had tae dae something. (Agnes Mulholland SA2001:002)

3.2.2.3 Making Ends Meet

The Honeymoon Terrace tenements with their inside "lavvies" demanded tenants who could depend on a good and steady wage. With Jimmie's good wages and permanency of employment and the respect afforded him by his job, the Hanratta family were safe in their Honeymoon Terrace flat. They were not well off by any means, but their ability to depend on Jimmie assured them of a permanent home there and saved Mrs Hanratta from the shackles of debt. Yet, depending on Jimmie brought its own brand of constraints.

Being based on Jimmie's income and job security, the Hanratta 'system' was neither

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[4] Cf. p.128 above.

transferable nor capable of sustaining anyone other than those it the immediate family. Inflation-linked pay deals were not part of the industrial jargon of that time and a sudden additional demand on Jimmie's income would have taxed it beyond its capability. What happens to such a system and those who are dependent on it if the person earning the income is taken out of the equation? Disaster could be round the corner and could arrive quite suddenly without warning. The relative security of the kind experienced by Margaret's family was in fact more fragile than the security Cassie and her less well-off family and neighbours experienced with their greater reliance on debt management and household strategies.

Conclusions cannot be properly drawn without Jimmie's own testimony, but we have Margaret's word that Jimmie was dedicated to the family. Did he really have another option? Significantly, he did not marry until late in life and it would be fair to say that circumstances combined to wed Jimmie to his family.

The social network and credit system familiar to Cassie Graham and her family was a bond of a more complex nature. It had its limitations and people were known to fall foul of them and find themselves destitute, but generally it was a much more elastic system. It was more capable of sustaining those sudden changes in family circumstance. It had an in-built safety net for the next generation and was itself the product of previous generations struggles to deal with the vagaries of the urban industrial environment. Anderson (1971:57,61) makes the point in his study of mid nineteenth century Preston that, "more than 95 per cent of the population lived in the same household as one of their relatives" and that, "kinship does not stop at the front door ... a majority of people did

deliberately live near one or more kinsmen and many others probably tried to."

When Margaret Hanratta and Joe Donaghue decided to marry in 1935 they could not depend on Margaret's mother fixing them up with a room and there was no question of staying in the Honeymoon Terrace. Mrs Hanratta was a good payer and a clear rent book put her on a good footing with the factor, but a clear rent book was no more than one would expect from a Honeymoon Terrace tenant. Margaret's family circumstances meant that a move away from the family home to another part of the town was the most likely outcome.

3.2.2.4 Marriage and the 'Glen Factor'

Astonishingly, as we heard above, six months before their marriage Margaret and Joe secured a room and kitchen flat in the Glen's Inchgreen Street. Now, no matter who your contact was or how good a payer you were, the likelihood of getting a house so far in advance of marriage was extremely slender. Margaret's good fortune was largely down to the unattractiveness of the Glen to many Portonians. Quite simply, the Glen was considered too far away from the town centre to be a suitable place to live. As if to emphasis this even further, the tenement Joe and Margaret were to move to was in Inchgreen Street at the western-most extreme of the Glen, and therefore as far away as one could get from the Port town centre whilst remaining in the Burgh of Port Glasgow. Inchgreen Street was so nearly unpopulated and so far away from the town that it earned itself the sobriquet 'Garden City'. It was no secret that many Portonians were uninterested in living in this area.

> Down where we called the Garden City, there wis that many houses lying empty ... nobody wanted to live down there ... too oot the way. (Cassie Graham SA1998:09)

Nevertheless, Joe's family connections in the Glen were essential to Margaret agreeing to move there to settle down. His family had lived in the Glen for many years and were well established there (cf. Appendix Figure 29). The Glen had the same social nexus as the Bay or the town centre, and survival strategies were equally important for families in this part of the town. This meant that Joe's parents and especially his mother were able to exert some influence in the same way as Cassie's mother could in the town centre. Significantly, Joe's mother had a clear rent book She made use of her good name in the area to prepare the way for her son and daughter-in-law by approaching the factor on their behalf. Nevertheless, despite the fact that Joe's mother spoke to the factor he still had to go and formally request the house to be allocated to him and his wife-to-be.

> Joe went to a man called Kinniburgh. He give houses ...[but] ye almost had tae go on yer benders tae get a house. Well, it so happens his [Joe's] mother had a good rent book, y'know whit Ah mean. She wis well got that way. (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1998:09)

Notably, this was Joe's task and not Margaret's. Coming from outside the Glen she had no influence or status.

The offer of a room and kitchen so far in advance of their marriage was, for Margaret, an opportunity too good to miss. In his job as a shipyard carpenter Joe was subject to the vagaries of that industry, and Margaret knew that they would be facing periods of unemployment. As much as she would have liked to remain close to her mother, Margaret knew she would have to have access to the social network which proximity to

the Donaghue family offered.

The Inchgreen Street tenements were certainly more basic than anything Margaret might have come across in Honeymoon Terrace. However, her delight about the offer of this house was not so much about what, in effect, it was, but what it was not. It *was* part of an old tenement standing amid the noise and fume-spewing engineering industry of the Clyde's lower reaches, "miles" from the town and boasting a shared "stair heid lavvie", all of which was alien to Margaret. Margaret's delight stemmed from the fact that her first house was neither a single end nor a rented room in some overcrowded room and kitchen dwelling in the town.

Despite Margaret's feeling that she would have preferred to remain close to her mother's home, the distance between them proved not to be a real problem. Margaret's move to the Glen did not preclude her visiting her mother. Her sadness at moving away from the area she grew up in was tempered by the need to be safe after marriage, and Joe's family and Glen connections offered her that security. Nevertheless, there was one aspect of the Glen that gave her cause for concern. The area had for a long time been a stronghold of Protestantism, which was a serious issue for consideration in religiously sensitive 1930s Port Glasgow.

3.2.2.5 The Glen: a Citadel of Orangeism?

In the eyes of most of the Port's Catholics, Margaret had every right to be concerned about leaving the relative harmony of Honeymoon Terrace life to live in the midst of those who hated her religious persuasion. The Glen was notorious as a hotbed of Orangeism and a dangerous place for Catholics to set foot in. However, Joe's family

were Catholic also and their experience had been not all bad. Significantly, they had lived in the Protestant Glen for years and long before the destitution of the 1930s intensified religious divisions in the town.

> The Glen used tae be a big big area, from here [Highholm St] right down tae the Boundary [Greenock]. A lot of trouble about religion in this town at that time [1930s]. A Catholic man couldn't have walked it down there or somebody would have tackled him. Stay in yer own end! Talk about ghettos? Ghettoes here alright! (Cassie Graham SA1998:10)

Cassie's account is not an exaggeration. It is her account of the situation as she remembers it. But we must be aware that Cassie was viewing events at the Glen from the Catholic "ghetto" that was the Bay Area. From their respective camps, these two religiously segregated areas saw their corner as the historically just and honourable one - the Scottish Presbyterian versus the Irish Papist. Their intermittent hostilities invariably took place either in or around the vicinity of the respective camps. Margaret was raised in one of the streets furthest removed from the Glen, but her life was not so sheltered that she was unaware of local opinion on the Glen. And, of course, her relationship with Joe gave her a closer insight. But apart form Joe's family being established and settled in the Glen area, Margaret had other reasons for not being so concerned as to reject the prospect of moving into a room and kitchen dwelling on the basis of the potentially hostile nature of the area.

3.2.2.6 Lacking a Ghetto Mentality

Margaret's father was a Catholic of Irish extraction and his children were all raised Catholics, but he died young. Mrs Hanratta continued to raise them Catholics, but she

herself was not a member of the Catholic Church. She remained close to the moral values of her Quaker education. The closes on Honeymoon Terrace did not resemble those of the Bay Area, neither in the religious make-up of their respective occupants nor in their architectural features. The religious persuasion of most of those who lived up Margaret's close made it more akin in this respect to the Glen closes, but only in that respect. The Protestants in Honeymoon Terrace considered themselves graced with a higher standard of respectability than the Protestants of the Glen. The male Protestants of Honeymoon Terrace were largely skilled tradesmen and foremen and the power they had over those they chose to favour and/or disfavour was not based on physical confrontation and ghetto mentality; it had its roots in the workplace and the power and influence they could exert there. Nevertheless, religious ties were strong, and there was an understanding and an empathy with the Glen masses by their socially and economically better placed counterparts in Honeymoon Terrace.

The Hanrattas assimilated well into this tenement community. The children lived the religious legacy of their father and the mother swore allegiance to no church.

> And of course, ma mother, no harm to her, she wasn't any the worse o' it ... she wasn't a Catholic. She had nothing what so ever against Catholicity, but she just couldn't take it in ... see, anybody that's a Protestant, it [Catholicism] takes a quair bit o' understandin' ... (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:16)

Nevertheless, her moral values fitted in well with those of her neighbours and her quiet and unobtrusive lifestyle endeared her to the respectable set that were her neighbours.

Margaret, the youngest of the Hanratta children, grew up in this atmosphere and developed a different attitude to her Protestant neighbours than Cassie Graham did in her Bay Area tenement. Remaining sheltered from the worst effects of sectarianism, she

grew up with little notion of the siege mentality that existed in the Bay and Glen quarters. Margaret's more tolerant attitude would undoubtedly play an important part in her future. It allowed her to question her own beliefs and perhaps allowed her the wisdom to accommodate other ideas.

Margaret's method of approaching people was not to assert her belief and await the response, but to allow time to determine the nature of any relationship. Her belief was in many respects about humanity first. This was a principle that her mother set much store by and it was one that Margaret took forward throughout her life too.

> Ah mean through all the, ach ... life's ups and downs, the sorrow it seems tae be ... like Jeckyll and Hyde. Ah mean, the saying goes, "There's so much good in the worst o' us and so much bad in the best o' us that it ill behoves the best o' us tae talk aboot the rest o' us!" ... 'cause there's nobody a saint, Ah don't really believe there's anybody a saint. (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:117)

Margaret's approach to her religion certainly played a part, even if it was an unconscious part, in her decision to settle in the Glen. The fears that raged through the Bay Area's Roman Catholic population when faced with the prospect of setting foot in the Glen was not part of Margaret's psyche. This, and the fact that Joe O'Donaghue lived in the Glen and he and his family appeared to have escaped the worst ravages of the Protestant horde which was believed to reside there, served to convince Margaret that neither her religious or physical well-being were in serious danger by moving to the Glen.

It cannot be overlooked that Port folk often measured the status of working class housing by the time it would take you to get out of it rather than get in. Cassie tells us that:

> If ye came frae George Street yer name wis mud ... because it got a bad name ... and if they got you intae George Street, in a house, ye couldn't get oot it, they wouldn't gie ye a shift nowhere else. (Cassie Graham SA1998:09)

Inchgreen Street came under the same category. Margaret and Joe married into their new home in 1935. Twenty-five years later they were moved into a brand new council house. Inchgreen Street, along with the rest of the Glen Area tenements, was eventually demolished.

3.3 Conculsion

The recounted experiences of these two Port Glasgow women serve to reveal some aspects of the essence of community in this industrial town. Through the issue of housing, we can see that more than simply making an application was involved in the process of gaining somewhere to live, and that a great deal more than simply its state of repair affected the decision to accept or reject it. Cassie and Margaret were both approaching married life at the same time. They were not so different from one another: both knew the face of hardship and were familiar with the nuances of Port life. Yet, they approached the issue of life after marriage and, more importantly, housing from very different standpoints.

Cassie was determined not to distance herself from the familiar surrounding of her family and the town centre. Margaret, however, knew that her future couldn't possibly lie in Honeymoon Terrace. Obviously, family circumstances were the largest determinants in their respective situations.

It had long been established that it was the women's task to arrange the household; in

many cases it was also their task to find one. Port women had over generations instituted a system based on social credentials through which this need - and others - could be met. Cassie understood from an early age that she would be provided for by her mother, or more correctly by her mother's reputation. Reputations had to be earned and trustworthiness tried and tested before complete participation was gained; these characteristics were proved not only by one's own actions, but by those of the extended family, parents and grandparents. Mrs Hanratta was never in the situation of having to make use of these community social systems and, of course, she was disadvantaged because her family and that of her husband came from outside Port Glasgow. They were obliged to survive on their own resources. Their difficulties were increased by the untimely death of Mr Hanratta. Their subsequent reliance on the eldest son, almost to the complete exclusion of any appeal to credit, made them more independent of social networks. Margaret's realisation of this situation is reflected in the relative ease with which she moved out of her own community into that of her husband-to-be. Only through the mechanisms open to Joe's mother could Margaret guarantee herself a house after marriage. For her, the attainment of a house in the Glen and the move away from Honeymoon Terrace meant a measure of security.

For Cassie, the prospect of moving away from the town centre and her mother's contacts was a recipe for disaster. The offer of a house in Glasgow Road was no use in itself. The house was only part of the equation – she needed to know someone in the area or vicinity of the house to help her settle in. Cassie's support network was in the town with her own people, and so she used her mother's networks there to find a rented

room where she lived with her husband and bore three children before getting a nearby room and kitchen. The extremely cramped conditions of her rented room - unimaginable to Margaret - were more acceptable to Cassie than a spacious house away from the community she knew and depended on.

Both Cassie and Margaret sought a house; they embarked on their quests from different backgrounds and both have different stories to tell about how they got one. Yet, they both sought the same thing, which was infinitely more than a house: they sought association. Somewhere where they could depend on people to help them in hard times. They wanted to be part of a system which would recognise them as a member, if not on their credentials, then on the credentials of their family or in-laws. The Bay Area and the Glen became at least partially exclusive communities because word of mouth, common relationships and respectability played such an important part in the system of gaining access to the facilities for providing subsistence independent of wage earning capacity.

Chapter Four

SOCIAL FELLOWSHIP: WORK, ENTERTAINMENT AND PLEASURES

From where did town centre Portonians draw their enjoyment in the inter-war period and what was it that constituted for them the pleasures of life? Men and women found pleasure in the public house scene. They both, in more equal numbers, sought the comfortable entertainment of the local cinema. But these pursuits, like supporting professional football teams, were commercially based. My interest in looking at entertainment at inter-war Port Glasgow is to explore those pastimes that developed out of the need for people to provide their own entertainment. Further, this chapter will seek to explore the pleasures that were extracted from the chores and demands of working class motherhood.

If we believe that entertainment must ultimately lead to enjoyment, does it also hold true that enjoyment equates with entertainment? Of course it does not. We can attain a measure of enjoyment from things which we would not normally associate with entertainment, as for instance, work. Therefore, who decides for us what entertainment and enjoyment is, if it is not ourselves? And is there a required amount of these things for a life to be fulfilled? These are not measurable details, yet they have formed a fundamental part of life from the beginning of time. Some would argue that there is a method of measuring the extent to which we as human beings participate in recreational pursuits. In 1936, in the middle of the deepest economic depression to hit the modern world, it was claimed that "the quality of one's life now tends to be judged on the use to

which one's leisure hours are put" (Carnegie 1943:100)[1]. In commissioning a report the Carnegie UK Trust was concerned about the level of male unemployment and about providing leisure facilities to alleviate tensions, and the accompanying potential for social disorder, in the areas of highest unemployment. Thus, the scale was designed to gauge how men used their 'leisure' time, not women.

4.1 A Spiritual Game-Plan for Leisure

The Catholic Church's social and cultural mission went hand in hand with its spiritual mission at this time, and using leisure it pursued its priority to capture the hearts and minds of the men: their souls would follow. There is perhaps nothing exceptional in this as it is a situation almost as traditional as the church itself. But, it is important because this tradition within the church matched the very male-dominant industrial society that was Port Glasgow.

The Catholic Church's determination to marshal and motivate its disparate, unruly and often unreliable flocks across Scotland's west central belt had never been in doubt. From the mid nineteenth century when priests arrived from Ireland to shepherd the wave of Irish immigrants arriving in Scotland's industrial towns, monumental tasks of church and school building projects were undertaken and completed with limited resources and by largely volunteer labour. Such projects were often instigated on the initiative of one

[1] The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, in preparation for its quinquennial review of 1941-45, commissioned a report to consider "whether there was any experiment which it might usefully initiate or assist, dealing particularly with the needs of a somewhat older age group that is served by the Boy's Clubs ... the Trust resolved to appoint three special officers who, each in his own area, should spend three years in a fairly intensive study of the situation and experience of young men between the ages of 18-25, especially of those who were unemployed." (Carnegie UK Trust 1943:iii)

man, the parish priest[2]. St. John's church, Port Glasgow, had such a priest in the 1930s. It was the Rev. J.P. Towie, a native of Dublin, who had the idea to establish a leisure centre for his male congregation.

> Wherever he was stationed, he was recognised by all as a hard worker who thought all the time of the welfare of his people, not only spiritually but temporally ... The same idea seems to have occurred to his mind in Port Glasgow where unemployment was rife. A redundant shipyard came into the market shortly after his arrival in Port Glasgow and he saw the possibilities of turning it into a recreation ground where unemployed men might find opportunities for healthy recreation, and forget their troubles for a time ... "Murray Shore" (called after the owners, Messrs. Murray of Greenock), as the converted shipyard was henceforward to be called, required much clearing and adaptation to become a pleasure ground, for the place was encumbered with the debris of a shipyard, much of it of heavy metal structure, embedded often in concrete in the surface. But voluntary labour got to work, and in time a bathing beach, a boat slip, tennis grounds, football field and a permanent bandstand, made their appearance. Offices and rooms formed halls and committee rooms to accommodate the various clubs and activities which already existed or developed. A new venture was a rowing club of which Father Towie was honorary president. (anon. 1954:19)

John Connaghan remembers well the establishment of this new facility and adds an insight into how some money at least was generated through the labour involved in building the premises.

> Father Towie bought Murray Shore to make it into an area for the Catholics tae go down there and have a good time. Now, they built a fitba park, miniature golf, badminton, two eh on either side of the shore the boys themselves, this wis all done voluntary, ... built two big rows of bathing huts and a slip-way for putting the boats down. An' all them boys went down an' they picked all the rivets and the aul waashers innat aff the quay. They were all selt fur scrap [value]. An' then we had ... the boat shed, above the boat shed ye had the hall and then just down from that ye had the St. John's band hall where they used tae teach the junior band members in there, young boys comin' up tae be members of the band. (John Connaghan SA1990:113) (cf. Appendix Figure 34)

No church records of this period survive to show just how significant Father Towie's

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[2] For a thoroughly researched account of the role of the priest in establishing the nineteenth century Scottish Catholic Mission in the west central town of Hamilton, see Mitchell (1995a).

contribution to the Murray Shore development was. However, we can gain a measure of his commitment from acts about which few or no documents survive but for which he is remembered by those who benefited.

H.H.: So, where would they (Murray Shore members) get the money tae buy rowin' boats an' oars?

J.C.: The rowin' boats were gifted tae them.

H.H.: By who?

J.C.: The 'Stella Maris', Ah cannae mind who gave the 'Stella Maris'. But, Dr. O'Kane gave the 'Kathleen' and the 'Maureen'.

H.H.: Was he a local doctor?

J.C.: Aye, ye had tae pass him (be examined) before ye got intae the Hibs (Ancient Order of Hibernians Benefit Society)[3] ... And eh, the "JP Towie" that was gifted by Father Towie. And then they had what they called two trade boats (work boats), the 'Arch' and 'The Port'. Ye had about eight or ten boats in there at any wan time. An' each o them boats if ye were tryin' tae buy them, Ah'd say they'd cost ye about £80 or £90. (John Connaghan SA1990:113)

Whatever the exact price of these rowing boats, they would not have been inexpensive. And of course, we shall never really be able to judge what means Father Towie had for such huge outgoings; certainly his priest's stipend would not have allowed for extravagant donations. However he managed it financially, Father Towie left an indelible impression on his male congregation with such an act and no one could doubt the level of commitment precipitating such gestures. It certainly paid off in terms of gaining the loyalty and support of the men in the parish.

> The chapel tae us wis the greatest thing on God's earth. (John Connaghan SA1990:113)

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[3] Prospective members underwent examination before being allowed to join benefit societies. The AOH, although politically and religiously motivated, was a benefit society under the rules of the 1912 Insurance Act.

Murray Shore rowing team went on to become giants in the local and not so local rowing community, at least in the minds and folklore of the Murray Shore supporters (cf. Appendix Figure 35).

J.C.: The Royal West (Greenock), ye had them, then ye came up (the river) and ye had the Old Quayhead, then ye came up frae that ye'd the Ladyburn, then ye had eh Davey Shore, then the Murray Shore, then Newark. Ninety percent of they men wir a' riveters ... the Ladyburn crew [had] two riveters, a holder-on and a bus driver, Rorisson, Robertson, King, MacKechnie. That wis their championship crew. The Davey Shore wis the Millers (riveters). But the greatest crew in the world was the Murray Shore crew; Allan, O'Neill, Downie and Bonnar in the fours and O'Neill and Bonnar in the pairs. They won more championship medals than I think anybody ever seen.

H.H.: Who were they competing against?

J.C.: Oh, ye might go tae Loch Lomond against the Loch Lomond crowd, go tae South Queensferry, North Queensferry, Glasgow Green, the Quay here (Port Glasgow) or doon the Esplanade (Greenock) ... Used tae get Pollock's lorry ... put a big cross piece on the lorry, load yer two boats on that, maybe the 'Stella Maris' or the 'Eileen' or the 'Maureen' ... everybody sat on the lorry there givin' it buckin' laldy, gin up the road an' a sing-song comin' back doon. They used tae run buses through tae see the Murray Shore. (John Connaghan SA1990:113)

Murray Shore of course catered only for the men of St. John's parish. The Protestant churches in Port Glasgow and the various socio-political and religious organisations provided similar organised pastimes for their members. But, already by looking at this one example we can see a very sophisticated system of social organisation for the Catholic men of the town. It provided them with entertainment in their own town during periods of unemployment and employment alike; it gave them a tremendous and vital sense of self-worth and the occasional or regular sense of community achievement, if John Connaghan's account of the Murray Shore team's prowess is considered. It took them across country to meet other teams and it resulted in reputations being established and sometimes precipitated a very welcome free drink for those who found themselves

on the winning side.

J.C.: Well, eh, the Ladyburn they won the maidens' and the juniors' that day ... an' aul Jock McKendrick says, 'Oh, don't worry about it lads, it's the first cup we've got for twelve year' he says, 'Ah'll fill the cup.' Waant tae huv seen the Maidens' Cup, it was about that size, bigger than the Scottish Cup (football). At the finish-up he filled it wi' beer. (John Connaghan SA1990:113)

During the cold and stormy winter months rowing and boating in general came to an end but there was no shortage of male orientated pastimes to fill this gap.

> That wis the pastime at night in the dark nights, you came down, you went tae the Hibs Hall (AOH) ... they had three tables ... they used tae hiv a billiard league here, the West of Scotland billiard league, ye hid the League o' the Cross, the Library (The Moffat Library), ...then ye would walk doon, ye had Anderson Guise at Ladyburn, down further wis St. Laurence's. Ye'd about nine or ten [billiard] clubs in the district at that time. (John Connaghan SA1990:113)

Billiard clubs were prolific at that time as John's memory shows, but those he recalls were only the ones in the District league. Almost any recreation hall at that time would not have been complete without a billiard table and almost everyone played.

P.C.: When we were in Hamilton's [shipyard] we'd that fitba team. We trained up in the Gunners place roon ... the west harbour ... where the pub wis, the old Jubilee Bar. Well, there wis a club up there, the Royal Garrison Artillary (Gunners) ... an aul Captain Bruce he wis the head man in it so he wid allow us up there tae train. We'd go away an' dae a bit o' runnin', som'dy wid gie's a rub doon. They'd a billiard table an' wan o' these punch balls n' different things. So, we were allowed tae train up there as long as we didnae do any damage.

H.H.: So how often would yese go up there then?
P.C.: Mibe wance or twice a week. Aul Bruce wid lay som'dy in charge. Ye paid tuppence Ah think it wis tae ... get on the billiard table. N' eh, som'dy wid be in charge, mibe get two or three of them tae play billiards, mibe get a tanner [sixpence] or somthin', he had tae gie that tae aul Bruce. Sometimes he'd [collector] kept tuppence fur hisel'. (Paddy Collins SA1998:13)

The job of collector rotated among Paddy's gang, which meant that everyone got a free night on the billiard table, but the supervision was not in the least strict. Scenes like these were being repeated throughout the male community of the town in many clubs.

There was certainly no shortage of ways for men to entertain themselves, even when things were tight financially.

4.2 Wringing out the Pleasures

The Carnegie study, seeking to discover what the interviewees did with their free time, could easily have directed its questions to the female population also. Had they done so, they would have found that for Port Glasgow's married female population life was necessarily acted out at the bottom end of the amenity scale. Cunningham's research into working class leisure shows that between the sexes there was "a markedly different experience ... with women enduring greater constraints on their opportunities for leisure." He reminds us further that "if family budgets allow something for the 'luxuries' of the man, they make none at all for the women" (Cunningham 1985:149). So, where did the Port's female population seek organised entertainment?

Catholic women were also subject to the Church's social and cultural mission, but the spiritual and charitable nature of the efforts made on behalf of the female congregation was much more dominant. St John's brochure on parish organisations at this time lists only two that were for females, and they appear to have put great store by their dedication to good works. "The Women's Sewing Guild has worked as efficiently and as unobtrusively as the brothers of St. Vincent de Paul. It assists them by visiting special cases reported to them. On the advice of the priests, this Ladies' Auxiliary visits necessitous families giving relief as required in grants of clothing, bedding and special nourishment for the sick." (anon. 1929:17)

The only other society listed as catering specifically for the women of the parish was The Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, which more obviously had a spiritual foundation and which appears to have been popular among their ranks. "The glory of the Faith in Port Glasgow is seen at its best in the tremendous devotion of the women of the parish to their Confraternity; the church is packed to overflowing on the meeting nights, crowded Guilds receive Holy Communion on the Sunday mornings. The women have a profound admiration for the earnestness and zeal, the whole-heartedness of their director [parish priest] whose constant care is their spiritual welfare. Their loyalty is superb." (anon. 1929:17)

Significantly, both these societies were overseen by a spiritual "director. Even those societies that were female orientated were overseen and monitored by men. For young single women there was dancing and the socialising associated with courting, but for married women and mothers especially, pastimes as such were redundant. Contemporary commentators such as Margaret Loane, exploring the housewife's role in early twentieth century England, found that women among the poor working class "generally abjured, from the very day of their marriage, all pleasures but those of a strictly domestic nature" (Loane 1909:13). For Cassie Graham even friendships forged as a child in the Bay Area became increasingly difficult to maintain.

> Ah never had a mate eftir Ah got married. Jist went up tae ma mother's. (Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

Touching on dancing momentarily, we can see that even this pastime served to reinforce the notion of organised male-dominated leisure pursuits. Of course, dancing by its very nature would not have been organised exclusively for women, but the places dances were held in emphasis the male orientated nature of this pastime. Clubs like the

Ancient Order of Hibernians (cf. Appendix Figure 31), the Orange Order, the Labour Hall, the Mechanics, the Boilermakers, the Engineers, the Co-op and myriad social clubs with sporting connections like The Port Glasgow Quoiting Club, were male bastions. Even church-run dances were held at the behest of male organisations including the male charitable St Vincent de Paul Society, St Vincent's Boys' Guild, The League of the Cross (a male temperance institute), The Billiard Club, St John's Prize Band (cf. Appendix Figure 32), The Literary and Debating Society, The Irish National Foresters, The Ancient Order of Hibernians (cf. Appendix Figure 33), and St John's Minstrels. Some of these organisations were further segmented into smaller units comprising football teams, quoiting teams and other sporting clubs. Quite clearly, female needs in relation to entertainment were not represented in the organisations or by the local managers of leisure. Certainly, in the minds of many of those women who experienced this situation the notion of organised leisure and dedicated pastimes was a forlorn one.

> As for pastimes, pastimes! No pastimes then. (Cassie Graham SA1990:114)

Nevertheless, as Lummis says, "even the inmates of prison camps find occasions for humour" (Lummis 1987:20). And, whilst working class women's lives were constrained by domestic demands which left little opportunity for leisure pursuits we cannot describe these lives as being devoid of pleasure or self worth. The domestic environment did provide for a real sense of self-worth and comfort among female kindred spirits, and within this domestic workshop there was pleasure to had from the chores and duties which had to executed with expertise and authority and often with the help of neighbours. As Lewis (1986:108) puts it, "these were lives of purpose and by no means devoid of affection or mutual support within the family and the neighbourhood." Port

Glasgow's women found their humour and enjoyment in the company they shared and the neighbourliness that they relied on.

4.2.1 Neighbourliness and Female Bonding

> There were good bits about it. There was comradeship, your family and people liked less and they done with less and they were happier with less. (Margaret O'Donaghue, Time Quines I/V p.11)

Even those tasks performed daily by individual wives and mothers, like making meals, tending the children, "going the messages", and washing the stairs were rarely performed in complete isolation. Dependency on neighbours was fundamental to life in Port Glasgow's tenement streets and so gave even these daily domestic chores a measure of collectivity. Other chores such as wash-house and "steamie" visits and paid employment were fundamentally collective and no different in this respect to traditional male shipyard employment which is so famous for its camaraderie and bonding qualities.

In the domestic environment, women acting with their family and neighbours to make ends meet, made bonds as strong and meaningful as those forged by shipyard workers. Their chores were made less onerous through the knowledge that they would not be performed in isolation. There was an element of enjoyment and pleasure to be gained from performing them in this way.

As well as washing, cooking, caring for the children, managing the budget and all the other tasks the day brought, women had other experiences which show how they, often more than the men, were participating in "the workshop made for social fellowship" which the Carnegie Trust enquirers saw as vital to male "character building" (Carnegie UK Trust 1943:100).

4.2.2 Quilting: Workshop for Social Fellowship

C.G.: Oh aye, every night Ah went tae ma mother's, every night of ma married life, every night ... our family wis all like that, sufficient for wursels, y'know, that kinna way, a family o daughters.

H.H.: What kinna things wid ye dae in yer mum's at night then?

C.G.: Ah'd get Annie (sister) an' spread it (quilt) out on the floor. Ma maw'd gether patches up, bits affa coats, n' bits affa different things, fancy bits. Ah'd be daein' wan end an she'd be daein' the other, an then we'd be quiltin' them, then they'd be put on the bed ... a good pastime.

H.H.: And were you just talking away whilst you done that?

C.G.: Aye, jist talkin and there wis aye somebody in and out, you know whit Ah mean. Ye were never lonely. (Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

The "workshop made for social fellowship" did not have to be a place of paid employment. Much of what these women did as domestic chores and daily routine provided social fellowship as a matter of course.

The situation explained by Cassie is of course no longer necessary: what were once essential tasks undertaken by women have been eradicated; moreover, the role they served in maintaining the fabric of a community was not replaced with anything akin to the serious bonding gained through these experiences. The same level of satisfaction and collective achievement cannot be gained from buying a quilt even if the money for it is raised collectively. A quilt is a quilt at the end of the day, but a self-made quilt produced by a family or collective effort is bound to bring greater satisfaction. That it does bring satisfaction not only in the end, but in its making is special. There cannot be many parallels between the experiences of Hebridean women and those in Port Glasgow, but in this instance I believe there is one. Describing a women's work group Marjory Kennedy Fraser witnessed in her

Hebridean tour, she writes: "Communal labour tends to conserve the chants used in its practice, and in 'waulking' the heavy, long-sustained, steadily rhythmical work could only be performed with the help of ... song. The real source of joy for the women lies in the strangely exhilarating effect of socially performed, long-continued repetitions of any bodily movements accompanied by song." (Fraser 1929:167)

The age-old tradition of waulking the cloth - shrinking a newly woven web by soaking it in dilute ammonia and thumping it in a rotating fashion around a table occupied by women - was performed to the rhythm of songs unique to the task and sung by the workers (cf. Appendix Figure 41).

There was no ritualistic singing associated with the quilt sewing which Cassie and her family participated in, but it served, I believe, the same purpose. They were women brought together out of necessity to perform a task from which in its performance, often at the end of a hard day's toil in the house or at a place of employment or both, they extracted enjoyment and pleasure. They experienced, in the words of Marjory Kennedy Fraser, "the strangely exhilarating effect of socially performed [labour]". This was not a task which loomed before them as the day wore on, as another task to be endured; rather, it was anticipated as a social event. And, like their Hebridean counterparts, Port women performed this task out of sight of the menfolk. The men were not barred from attending and indeed, some reports describe the waulking as a means to marriage with suitors waiting around the work place in the hope of sighting their loved one. However, in most cases men made themselves scarce at these events. Certainly in Port Glasgow they were obliged, rather like children when adults were talking, to leave the women alone. It cannot be said that this represents a clear example of female domestic authority, for the

men offered little resistance to the proposal that they vacate the house for the street if nowhere else. In this way the women were left alone in the house and performed their task whilst exchanging news and views.

4.2.3 Bees: Friendly Banter or Private Destinies Bared?

Edward Shorter in his exploration of romance in the modern family setting claims that social gatherings, like that described by Cassie, were an integral part of popular life in almost every part of continental Europe. He cites the French expression *veillée* and its German couterpart *Spinnstube* or *Rockenstube*, meaning simply the place where an evening's communal spinning, knitting or sewing work was done. Shorter (1975:129) describes these gatherings: "We encounter a peasantry who lived closely enough together to share three or four evenings a week and, in so doing, make the private destinies of its members everybody's business." He goes on to say that it is hard for him to imagine anything more foreign to the modern urban experience or at least to the world he lives in, which may well be the case. However, for those living in the modern urban industrial community of Port Glasgow today, it is not so foreign a concept. Knitting or sewing bees are a common part of working class culture in this community and these gatherings have a history in Scottish culture similar to those quoted by Shorter for other European cultures. The old Scots word *rocking* according to the *Concise Scots Dictionary* denotes "a gathering of women neighbours to spin and chat together; any convivial gathering of neighbours". Modern day female gatherings, like knitting bees, facilitate the spread of news and gossip, serve the need for group entertainment and sociability and provide a forum for sharing problems and gaining sympathetic advice from friends. Friendship forms the basis of these modern day knitting bees in a way that was not possible for

married women years ago. The idea of Cassie Graham arranging a woman's night on a regular basis so she and her friends could exchange news and gossip just didn't exist. In fact, as we have seen above, Cassie's marriage, like that of other young women, marked a watershed in her lifestyle socially.

However, in the inter-war period in Port Glasgow when women spent their day surrounded by relatives and friends, the need for organised evening meetings did not exist to the same extent as now. Their friendships were expressed differently and were shaped by their own circumstances, i.e. in daily acts of assistance and understanding about the duties they had to perform. The physical closeness and shared experience precipitated an emotional closeness. It was in this socio-economic and domestic setting that news was spread, gossip imparted, sympathy was sought and control was enforced. Roberts (1984:188-189) tells us that "it is clear that the majority of working-class women relied on their neighbours (and their kin) for sociability and friendship ... the sociability between neighbours was very important. It was the chief method of passing on neighbourhood news and advice; it was the most effective way of exerting neighbourhood control; and it was an important way for women in particular to find comfort and friendship."

Another way of interpreting Shorter's claim that the peasant communities of the past made "the private destinies of their members everybody's business" is that through their close society they assisted and policed themselves. This is not to suggest that everyone was "friendly"; rather, that through a network of friendships the community developed a system of self-regulation. Roberts (1984:192) again: "Neighbours provided a mutual support society, but like all societies it had its rules and regulations, and it was expected

that all members would obey these rules. The rules were unwritten, but understood by all. Those who broke them were punished by self-appointed judges and juries. The system for controlling behaviour was an effective one."

Today, except in the most outlying and impenetrable areas, this system has been eroded, while the desire or need to combine as human beings for social, political, economic, religious and a whole range of other reasons, remains important. Although we may best view the self-regulating community by looking at the smaller and more remote communities, this was and is not a rural phenomenon. Port Glasgow's tenement streets and closes were to some extent self regulating during the inter-war period. And, in much the same fashion as the rural community, circumstances caused the inhabitants of these tenements to work together. Of course, we cannot assume that poverty was always a force for good neighbourly relations. It was also at the root of criminal activity and stormy family and neighbourhood relationships. Benson (1989:129) makes the point that "sometimes poverty (or the fear of poverty) made it difficult to even contemplate helping the neighbours. Sometimes poverty (and the fear of poverty) encouraged neighbours to prey upon one another ... In all events, it would be a mistake to believe that 'the poor did not steal from the poor' and to derive from this appalling adage unrealistic notions about the neighbourliness of working class life." Nonetheless, there seems to little doubt that poor neighbourhoods, with their overcrowded housing, their immobile inhabitants and their close ties of kinship, did tend to promote, rather than retard, a spirit of neighbourliness. Jim McCormack recalls a spirit of neighbourliness in existence that saw those who had little relying on the generosity of those who had something.

> Everybody felt sorry for everybody else ... the people were no strangers to one another because ye were all suffering the same ... there was no badness towards

> one another, everything was to help. If somebody had food and nobody else had food they were all helping each other. (Jim McCormack SA2001:007)

In fact, the greater the poverty the stronger the neighbourliness that was likely to develop. Certainly, Cassie Graham's (SA1990:114) reminiscence of life in the tenement streets of inter-war Port Glasgow was that "poverty brings people thegether", and her own mother provided an example for Cassie to try and emulate in her own life.

> She wis a great oul' wuman, Maw Lennon, they called her ... she'da took anybody in an' gied them a feed. No matter who came in there wis always something for them tae eat ... maybe a pot wi' a few vegetables or that in it. Soup sat at the side o' the big range, she always had a plate o' soup she could offer tae anybody that came in ... min' wan day there wis an oul' tramp sittin' oot the back stairs, freezin' an she took him oot a big bowl o' soup and big bit o' bread, she couldn't take him in because he wisn't clean, but she took him oot the bowl o' soup and the bread. (Cassie Graham SA1990:14)

Living conditions play a vital role in how people socialise and develop friendships. Perhaps Shorter's misapprehension over the existence of bees in the modern urban experience stems from the fact that he took England as an example of the UK experience. He claims that these gatherings took place "less so in England (which is why we don't really have a good corresponding English term for these evening bees)" (Shorter 1975:129). If this was the case then perhaps it was due, in part, to the different styles of working class housing common in Scotland and in England. Whilst working class terraced houses with their perimeter courtyard style walls to the rear of the property were popular in the English industrial towns, in Scotland the tenement dwellings were a more popular way of housing working class families. Tenement living demanded an intimacy between neighbours not experienced in the terraced street.

Of course, Shorter may claim that inter-war Port Glasgow does not fit his definition of a modern urban experience. What is certain, though, is that to Port

women of this era, bees were common affairs and served at least some of the same ends as those pursued in the continental bees researched by Shorter. "These evening work bees were ... for purposes such as the saving of precious firewood by congregating in a barn, the people profiting ... from one another's warmth." (Shorter 1975:131).

When Cassie Graham left her rented room to spend the evening in the family home, heat was as much a concern as sharing food and company. The context was different but the concerns were the same. To use Shorter's own words: "But for the world we have lost, different images are appropriate." (Shorter 1975:129)

Cassie Graham and others like her gained great satisfaction from the evenings spent sewing patchwork quilts with her family. They were pleasurable occasions, and this is not to undervalue the end product. Quilts were a valuable and lasting asset to the home and in most circumstances were items which could not be purchased for lack of cash. For at least one member of the group this quilt, which they had witnessed growing over a long time, and bits of which they would recognise as a former coat or even older patchwork quilt, would become theirs to greet the winter with. The others drew satisfaction from the act of giving and helping, but for them all, the quilt actually took second place to the social side of the task. This is a powerful example of how in part, the fabric of working class industrial urban culture and the network of family and friendship ties were woven.

Another example of the place of these gatherings in the wider social fabric lies in the fact that young women, some newly-weds and others longer married, would benefit from the older women at these gatherings in the ways of the world. These were the days

before sex education in school and technologically advanced media systems disseminating morally challenging information throughout society. Very few mothers and even fewer fathers would ever broach this subject with their children. But, invariably the information received would come in the form of warnings as daughters prepared themselves for the dancing[4]. Bessie Brennan recalls her experience: "My mother didn't tell me the facts of life. She used to say, 'Now remember, you're going out, and look after yourself. Watch what you're going about.' She gave us good sound advice, she did. You heard all the wee bits at your work. You picked up from there." (Smith 1989:231)

The warnings Bessie got as she set out to meet her friends were common enough. And in the Port as in other towns, pre-marriage female entertainment was equally common and popular and tended to take the form of organised events like dancing and cinema-going. Dancing was the more popular pastime among young single Portonian women. In fact, so important was the dance scene to young women at this time that on reflection for some it would almost seem that they did little else with their spare time.

4.3 Pre-Marriage Pleasures: on the Look-Out for a "Lod"

> Well, ye went tae the dancin' every night ye could knock up the money, thrupence ... had yer mother tortured an' any connections ye had tryin' tae knock up the dancin' money. An' we went tae the dance halls in Greenock an' we walked it doon an' we walked it back up again cause we hadn't the tuppence fur the car fare (tramcars) ... couldn't 've kept us in shoes, we'd a wore a pair shoes oot every fortnight between the dancin' and the walkin'. (Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

[4] It could perhaps be said that this kind of group pressure comes remarkably close to Shorter's observation that someone's private destiny became everybody's business. In my opinion it reinforces the view that the community had its own ways of sustaining its beliefs and codes and that what might appear to the modern observer as mere meddling was in fact a method of passing on vital advice.

It is significant and fundamental to female community identity in Port Glasgow that organised female pursuits or commercial female leisure almost always involved sexually co-active activities like dancing, cinema-going and walking. These activities could have been pursued by females on their own but they invariably involved men. Dancing, for instance, would have been unthinkable without male counterparts. The whole point of dancing has been usurped by modern society as far as Margaret O'Donaghue is concerned.

> Dancin, Hughie, at that time wis whit wid ye call it ... it was really dancin ... nowadays it's jist jumpin up n' doon in front o wan another. Som'dy wis tellin me Ah couldn't take it in ... that they were at some jig or somethin ... and two fellas got up and danced wi wan another. Well Hugh, Ah ask ye, and that wis lately. Now, whit can ye make o that? Ah wouldnae be in a dancin' wi the likes o that. Oh, for God's sake! Ah mean dancin is like ... put it this way, boy meets girl ... That's almost what the whole, the thing is about. But, two fellas, the world's went tae pot, definitely went tae pot. (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:17)

Organised or commercial entertainment for Margaret and most other Port women was as much about courting and getting a "lod" (boyfriend) as it was about enjoyment for enjoyment's sake. Most mothers acted like Bessie Brennan's and gave their daughters a salutory warning as they left the house. Margaret O'Donaghue's mother was, however, more alarming in her approach.

> Well, see, ma mother ... she was of the type, the Victorian type, ye didn't talk about anything pertainin' tae, about emb'dy comin intae the world, ye didn't talk, ye know, ye didn't talk about it. But, Ah mind her sayin wan time in front o' Annie [sister] an' I when we were teenagers an' she says "ye know", she says, "havin' a child's head comin intae the world is the most excruciating agony anybody can suffer" ... an' Ah think the idea o that, Hugh, was, now watch the men, the male sex. Mean tae say, watch them, watch them. (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:17)

As a rare departure from her "Victorian" moral code, Mrs O'Donoghue's graphic advice to her daughters indicates the importance she attached to the dangers of flirting with men. Of course, this is an understandable attitude for a widow dependent on her

working daughters' income to maintain the home in a society which afforded little understanding morally or financially to single mothers. Whatever it was that drove this woman to utter such a shocking warning, it certainly left an indelible mark on the mind of Margaret and her sister. Margaret recalls how she and her sisters used to joke about childbirth.

> They used tae say a joke. The joke is, a woman can have the first one and the man can have the second one, an Ah'm dammt sure there'll be no more. (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:17)

Dance as a method of match-making is, of course, well known. Students of social dance frame refer to it as the reproduction role. "In civilised society, social dancing is more aptly termed 'sub-erotic' but the sexual ingredient is no less essential for being less obvious. From the point of view of mate selection dancing has always been one of the recognised ways of bringing young people of different sexes together." (Rust 1969:131)

Another role performed by societal dance is said to be "tension management", which is best displayed during times of war and social upheaval, and which shows itself in an increased enthusiasm for dancing. To these precipitators, we should add unemployment, for it was in the period of the Hungry Thirties that dancing in Port Glasgow appears to have been at its peak. Nationally, too, the trend was towards an increased interest in dancing. Alongside the liberalising effects in society of the First War and the emancipation of women, there was the often declared subverting influence of indecent American trends. One disgusted clergyman felt that the American influence of "jerky and jazzy rhythmics" into the British dance scene meant definite moral decay. "If these up-to-date dances described as the latest craze are within a hundred miles of all I hear about them, I should say that the morals of a

pig-sty would be respectable by comparison." (Rust 1969:87)

The types of dancing pursued by Margaret and others were not the major concern of their mothers; rather it was the types of places dancing was taking place in and the types of young men who frequented them. However, there is no doubt that American rhythms were influencing dance and making it a more popular and mass entertainment. There was a democratisation of dance, leading it out of the world of the unaffordable hotel and cocktail bar scene into the Palais de Danse and club environment. Casciani (1994:48) tells us that "dancing enjoyed a post-war boom on a grand scale and nowhere more so than in Glasgow. Glasgow was dancing mad. During this period, huge 'Palais' ballrooms sprang up inviting patrons into a world of plush splendour, glittering lights and syncopated rhythms. There were eleven major ballrooms in Glasgow, more per head of population than anywhere else in the county. Edinburgh had five and London, with its chronic lack of space could boast only three or four. Dancing represented an escape from the extremes of real poverty."

At this level, however, we are still a mile away from the dance scene in the localised industrial environment that was Port Glasgow. Palaises de Danse and dance clubs did not exist there. Dances were organised by locals for locals in suitable available halls. For example, the Labour Hall provided the most frequent venue for Bay Area and town centre dancers (cf. Appendix Figure 42). Church halls and the town hall provided other venues. Established clubs like the Orange Lodge and the Ancient Order of Hibernians had their regular dance scene catering for their mutually exclusive clientele. Nevertheless, dance, even on this smaller scale, still facilitated a flight from one's poor surroundings and a journey into the romance of the dance. Yet,

one had to chose one's venue carefully.

> It wis the era of the dance frock ... if ye went in a blouse n'skirt, they said ach, don't dae that, they wear that in the "Mechanics". This wis a kinna scruffy dance hall in Greenock. (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:17)

One example like this does not prove a class division in the working class dance scene. But there was certainly a scene which Margaret O'Donaghue and others from Honeymoon Terrace would not participate in. The Greenock Mechanics' Club was one of these venues. There was no political or religious connotation here. The Mechanics was simply a rough-end-of-town venue where Margaret and her sisters would have felt out of place, dressed in their dance frocks (cf. Appendix Figure 43).

Margaret had a very romantic view of the dance scene. For her, the "era of the dance frock" encapsulated in real life the things which in another realm had captured her mind. Margaret loved the cinema. The great romantics of the silver screen like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, Errol Flynn and Betty Grable moved her heart and mind. She dreamt of being successful in the local church drama club, although she never realised her ambition. She read avidly the romantic novels in the Port's step-in library[5]. She listened to the radio. Dancing, which was open and available to her, was the method of drawing these together in real life, a way of expressing her feelings and dreams and a way of escaping the harsh realities of 1930s Port Glasgow. The dance scene, at least for Margaret O'Donaghue, was even more powerful than the cinema in this respect, because in the act of dancing she was taking all that she saw, heard and read in cinemas and books, and expressing it in her way through dance. The romance of the dance hall was

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[5] The step-in library was a private library in the town's John Wood Street that catered specifically for women. It stocked largely romantic paperback novels and it cost the reader two pence to join.

paramount in Margaret's mind. It was, in her own words, all about "boy meets girl". Her mother's graphic warning of childbirth rang in her ears to bring her back into the real world if any man should make unwanted advances. And, of course, the rougher the venue, like the Mechanics, the more likely she considered it to be a place for such behaviour. However, by her own order these places were off-limits.

Port Glasgow's females did not then experience life without organised entertainment but, the emphasis was very often on securing a husband and all the desirable trappings of marriage. Shorter (1975:132), exploring the theme of eighteenth and nineteenth century courtship as a public performance, controlled by the neighbourhood, says that in European folklore, dance was a calculated courting system. "A second arena for acquaintanceship which the community as a whole oversaw was dancing." He goes on: "Most of the evidence dates from the mid-nineteenth century, when traditional courtship patterns were in full dissolution ... yet, compare these local dances ... with the discotheque scene a hundred years later. Forming a couple was still a public event."

Dancing was a courting ritual but, significantly, it was pursued from a young age as any other game or pursuit which made up the range of childhood pastimes. As boys grew into men, and their pastimes developed and broadened dancing became only one part of that stockpile, and for some it was an insignificant part.

P.C.: Naw, they didnae go tae the dancin' ... mibbe that's how Ah didnae go ... well eh now 'n again there were a wee quoiting club up Clune Brae an' they used tae run a wee dance every other Friday night ... a wee dance at that time was till four o'clock in the morning ... sometimes Ah wid go up there but Ah never got up tae dance.

H.H.: Naw, even if ye went tae it ye wouldnae get up tae dance?

P.C.: Ah never seemed tae get the rhythm o' dancin'.

H.H.: Did ye dance eftir ye got married?

P.C.: Aye, aye ... Ah still canny dance!
(Paddy Collins SA1998:13)

However, for the women, dancing represented a significant part of their pastime stockpile and a large part of their free time was taken up in pursuit of entertainment and a husband. As Cassie Graham said, "we'da wore a pair o' shoes out every fortnight between the dancin' and the walkin' [to the dancing]". Pressed on what sort of pastimes he thought were open to women of his age, Paddy Collins declared:

> That's whit Ah'm tellin' ye, dancin' or the pictures.
> (Paddy Collins SA1998:13)

Although there was an understanding that dancing was about "boy meets girl", there was nothing blatant in its organisation or performance; dance provided entertainment and convention demanded that dance was performed between males and females, and under the cloak of convention, courting rituals were accomplished. More obvious forms of courting rituals existed, but these were not organised and did not therefore attract any moral impositions.

4.4 Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday

In the 1930s, for all its economic depression, the foundation of commercial entertainment had been established. The lack of work and the consequent lack of cash meant that young Portonians had to draw on the experience of self-help entertainers to provide the recreation and sociability required of courting.

> Aye, well, ye see, on a Tuesday night an' a Thursday night, that was called winchin' nights ... when ye were goin' wi' a lassie that wis the two nights ... and Saturday, that was the three ... ye wid take yer girl tae the pictures on a Saturday.

(Paddy Collins SA1998:13)

It may be that this trend was established on the basis of being able to afford to take one's girlfriend out for the evening. Saturday night was traditionally pay-day for many workers, and Cassie Graham recalls that workers were able to draw on their week's wages on these other nights. She specifically remembers how her father made use of this facility:

> Used tae send me down wi' a jug, Ah was about fourteen, tae Toner's pub for draught stout ... They got a sub-night on a Tuesday and Thursday. (Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

For Cassie and her boyfriend Neillie, who was a riveter and regularly unemployed, irrespective of the Depression, these "winchin' nights" brought only the prospect of a walk.

H.H.: [Paddy Collins] says there was two winchin' nights?

C.G.: Aye, Tuesday and Thursday.

H.H.: What was special ... ?

C.G.: Don't know. That was always winchin' nights, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. No money to go nowhere, y'know.

H.H.: So what did you and Neillie do on a Tuesday and Thursday then? Just go for a walk?

C.G.: Oh, we didn't go ... We went in different directions [from her sister and her boyfriend] ... If it wisn't, we jist had tae stan' in the stair ... Bloody awful. (Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

Those without the cash to participate in organised or commercial leisure activities simply had to make do with each other's company, whatever the circumstances or the weather. These winching nights appear to be created around work and more importantly, pay or "sub-nights", and it could be said that the situation above relates to those who

were already winching. But what of those not yet in relationships? Paddy Collins points out that the traditional Tuesday and Thursday walking nights were used by single people hoping to attract a partner.

P.C.: That's the night that all the girls that had no boyfriends or boys that had no girls all used tae go out the Glasgow Road ... tae see who you could pick up.

H.H.: And did people tend tae stick tae that then?

P.C.: Oh aye, aye.

H.H.: So, on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday?

P.C.: Ye were on yer own.
(Paddy Collins SA1998:13)

Winching nights out the Glasgow Road would take walkers beyond the actual Glasgow Road extent. In fact, their walk usually took in the area from Birkmyre's Mill (Gourock Ropework) to Woodhall and beyond towards Langbank. Winching night walks took those seeking romance beyond the crowded streets and recreation areas of the town centre but, more significantly, it took them away from the organised and monitored courting ritual of the dance hall. This was a method of courting and socialising that was employed in many industrial centres. Meacham (1977:192) reminds us that "in most cities there existed, by common agreement, one or more thoroughfares to which working-class youths flocked on Saturday and Sunday nights to meet casually for an hour or so of walking, joking and general flirtation." Dances, after all, were organised by local groups that were run by local well-known families. There would be few in attendance that were not familiar with each other through neighbourly, family and friendship connections. There had to be space for teenage relationships and liaisons of a more private and natural kind and winching walks out the Glasgow Road provided this

space and opportunity for Port youths. Roberts explored this theme in her study of three Lancashire industrial towns and found that whilst girls attending dances were conscious of parental control, even on the short walk home, they were more confident about achieving some measure of privacy through the winching night walk. "There were, of course, other ways for boys and girls to meet. All three towns [Barrow, Preston and Lancaster], in common with many others, accepted 'promenading' ... on the whole, it was approved of by adults because it was so public that again behaviour was strictly controlled." (Roberts 1984:71)

Of course, busy and overcrowded households, a constant lack of cash, regular unemployment and an equally as regular inability of boyfriends to take their girlfriend to some commercial pastime made walking an attractive option. However, in Port Glasgow, as in many west coast towns, rain was as frequent a visitor as unemployment, making walking an uncomfortable and often unhealthy winching method. Fortunately, the tenemented streets of Port Glasgow provided shelter from the weather conditions and, although cold, made the ideal spot for winching couples to become intimate.

4.5 Close Culture

> In fact, if a close could only talk, you would hear a quair tale, somethin' that wid make yer hair stand on end. (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:16)

There has developed a romantic notion about close winching. The scene depicts two young lovers seeking a few private moments together on the close stairs before returning to their respective homes. Mischievous children, often younger family members of one or the other winching couple destroy the enchantment of the moment. Infuriated and

exasperated suitors become disenchanted, not to mention exhausted, as they chase the marauding minors up and down the close. The romantic notion is accompanied by countless tales of opportunities lost, as a drunken father stumbles upon an amorous clinch just in time to save his protesting daughter from the ravages of some young riveter. All of these things no doubt occurred. Yet, there is a more realistic and somewhat less romantic tale to be told.

> That corner of a close beside the ash pits was a place outside time. Because the celebration [winchin'] did not take place under anyone's roof, moral responsibility could be kept at a distance if need be. The place of that shrine of Venus in the life of the locality was understood by everyone. Fathers knew where to look for daughters out too late. ... Residents making their way through the close to the ash-pits or the clothes lines in the back yard, sensing a couple's presence, retreated discretely and returned later. Lovers seeking a vacant shrine wandered on to the next close and the next. Some, driven and impatient, gave up the search and stood together in the lavatory or on one of the half-landings. (Glasser 1986:78-79)

4.5.1 Liaisons amid the Miasma

There is very little that can be said to be romantic about this situation. Working class tenement closes in the Port were dark, cold and often wet places. Unlike the more respectable closes of the shipyard foremen and skilled classes, the basic tenement close was open to the elements. The doorless entrance and similar opening at the rear to the back courts and ash-pits meant that even on a good night they were drafty. On a bad night of the kind experienced in the winter months when gales blew driving rain and sleet down the tunnel-like tenement streets of the Port's Bay Area, it must have been like standing in a vortex. The angular and utilitarian nature of the close architecture meant there were no good hiding places to provide shelter from the elements. The dark, angled wall beneath the stairs at the back opening on to the back court was the only possible source of escape and the donor of privacy for young couples (cf. Appendix Figure 44).

However, they were not renowned for their romantic ambience, quite the opposite, in fact.

> We left winchin up the close tae the last resort ... because maybe you'd be stadin' up again' a bloody door, a bloke lived in there, an' the bloody door wid open an' he'd come oot, maybe goin' tae the toilet in the stairheid, an' there you were ... doing yer damndest, "if ye don't get oot o' there Ah'll throw a bucket o' bloody waater over ye." ... the notion soon went aff ye. (John Wadell SA2001:010)

Working class tenements were infamous for their lack of proper facilities of the most basic nature. The Port's Bouverie Street tenements were among the worst the town had to offer and sanitation suffered accordingly. Large families shared toilet facilities which extended to one lavatory for every four families. It was not uncommon for these toilets with their old and overworked mechanisms to become blocked and broken. They could often remain broken for long periods, which meant that toilets had to be shared among an even greater number of people.

> There were always people running out of the Mill [at finishing time]. They used to try, no' that ye would talk about it, tae get out early, eh 'Whit they runnin' out for?' - 'Oh, they waant tae get intae the queue for the lavvie.' Now just you imagine Hughie, somebody had the flu and even somebody that had a wean [giving birth] ... how anybody ... had a birth in Bouverie I'll never know. (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1998:09)

Stories about tenement toilets and closes abound and range from the funny to the sad. They were ideal locations for youngsters to spy on drunken neighbours; they were terrifying places to have to visit late at night after a bout of ghost stories; they were cold and often filthy; they were ideal for listening-in to a courting couple standing in the back entrance. Also, sadly, these miasmic cells often provided the only shelter available to a winching couple. With the obvious level of demand placed upon these communal closets, they were neither pleasant nor private for any length of time. And they certainly

were not romantic (cf. Appendix Figure 45).

The young and sometimes not so young utilised the stairhead toilet to spy on life up the close. Stairhead gossip filtered through the toilet door to eager ears, as did the ramblings and free-spoken truths of the close inebriate as he lurched from stair to stair. And, of course, the intimate throaty whispers of lovers on the back stair or some other dimly lit spot in the close found their way into the communal toilet and became the stuff of tomorrow's gossip.

4.5.2 Privacy at a Premium

Although the back stair offered the most secluded and sheltered place for winching, it would not be uncommon to find couples on the landing right outside the family door of, in most cases, the woman.

H.H.: Was that quite common then for folk just tae stan' up the close?

C.G.: Aye. Back stair. When Ah wis goin' wi' Big Neillie ... Jist stood outside ... There wis three doors on each landing an' we'd stan' in ma maw's wan, an' then ma maw wid shout 'Cassie, time ye were in!' Oh, there wasn't much privacy. (Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

For a courting couple with no money there was virtually nowhere to go on a bad winter's night. The close offered the only semblance of privacy and intimacy they could hope for, and even then, we have seen how inadequate and often repulsive the back stair could be. If the elements or the fetid state of the close did not make intimacy difficult enough, the busy nature of the place often proved too much (cf. Appendix Figure 46).

C.G.: Aye, ye couldn't even stan' on the back stair. The weans were up n' doon by the hundred.

H.H.: Ful o' weans, George Street?

C.G.: Oh, ... battalions. Well, there wis ten o' us an' ma mother n' father wis twelve, an' every other house wis the same. (Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

Yet, all closes were potentially noxious and in many cases their unwholesome state was not for the lack of trying to keep them clean. Of course, some daughters developed their own reasons for cleaning the close. In Honeymoon Terrace, Margaret O'Donoghue's territory, on special occasions the close might merit an extra clean. First appearances can be crucial in any situation, and if the hint of romance was in the air, the state of the close could be crucial.

> When it came tae the stairs, oh, ... see when ye're daein' the stairs, if emb'dy wis goin' wi' emb'dy or ye're goin' tae a dance and ... a possibility they'd be on the stair for a while, maybe for five minutes, that stair wis beautiful whitened (laughter) ... Ye done that yersel in case ye hid a boyfriend.
> (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:16)

Of course, this scenario, as Margaret suggests, was more relevant to those who felt assured of returning from the dancing with a "lod".

4.5.3 Seriously Intimate or Dangerous Dalliance

> But, Ah'll tell ye another thing ... there was some wee lassies, Ah'm no' runnin' doon the male sex all the time, some wee lassies an' they threw themselves at them [the men]. Ye get some wee lassies that's mibbe foolish an' made a mistake, but then ye get wans that angle an' angle an' ... [are] determined [to get a partner]. (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:17)

Glasser (1986:78) describes a scene which he himself confronted in the Gorbals tenement closes of the 1930s: "A girl impatient to escape from home might go there with her 'feller' and let him 'stamp her card' - get her with child. And then, with luck, persuade him to accept paternity and marry her: a common enough route to matrimony."

There can be no doubt that this was a common enough occurrence and the sobriquet "shotgun wedding" developed into common usage in these communities to describe a situation in which the groom found himself forced to a large extent by neighbourhood

and family morals to marry the woman he had made with child.

> Tae tell ye the truth, most o' them thit got merried had tae get married or they wouldn't have been married. (Cassie Graham SA1998:09)

On the other hand, there was no guarantee that the man would bow to these pressures or even admit responsibility, and the dangerous consequences of this situation for the woman's future were well understood.

M.O'D.: In fact, it's been known years an' years ago, if emb'dy [parents] thought there was anything wrong wi' a woman they flung them oot. Ah mean they didn't get the sympathy an' all thit they get noo.

H.H.: What if somebody was ...?

M.O'D.: Pregnant, pregnant? If emb'dy falls, know, has a wean, they used tae fling them oot ... oh yes, Ah mean that's how everybody went, oh ... They [parents] got that incensed they would say 'out ye go'. Maybe they would take them in again, bit their initial reaction was 'oh no'. Because, ye see, financially an' every other way, it didn't suit them, it didn't suit them, but nowadays they're took by the hand. (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:17)

One can easily understand that a new child added to the difficulties facing the family budget, but the reaction that Margaret O'Donoghue recalls was not, primarily, about the financial burden this brought. Drawing on the effects of financial disincentives developed in the nineteenth century and which were embraced by twentieth century politicians, Robert Roberts (1971:30) make the point that, "whether these disincentives to illegitimacy encouraged premarital chastity is a question that remains to be answered [but] the shame of illegitimacy was such that a pregnant single women lowered not only the social standing of her family, but to some degree, that of all her relations." Fear of being thrown out of the household, even if it was only temporary, and the attendant problems that could cause their standing in the community, may have acted as a warning to young women to be aware of the intoxicating thrill of "five minutes on the stair" with

some "lod" from the dance. Nevertheless, it happened regularly.

It is understandable then that Margaret O'Donaghue's mother felt compelled to issue so explicit a warning to her daughters when they were heading off for a dance. And, it is equally understandable that concerned fathers regularly spoiled a winching couple's intimacy when their own daughter was involved.

> An' then there wis another oul' guy oot the ... awae out in Church Street ... 'e wis Irish an' he wis awful ... he'd open the door an' shout 'Jeanie, ye there, ye there? Ye below the light, below the light?' - 'Aye faither, aye faither. Ah'm below the [light]' - 'Aye well, you bloody weel stay below the light'.
> (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:16)

It is hard to know what it was exactly that made parents feel better about their daughter winching in the close as long as there was a light on. It was difficult not to be conspicuous in a working class close, light or no light, especially if one was not able to secure the back stair as one's space. And, as we have seen above, even if a dutiful daughter and her lover stood below the light, the father often felt the need to check at regular intervals on the situation. However, it is more likely that by stepping into the close to investigate the winching couple's movements, parents were in fact ensuring that they were not giving way to "rascality".

> Even the tales o' emb'dy goin' wi' wans ... it wis the time o' hard hats an' he [boyfriend] used to put 'es hard hat over the light [in the close]. (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:16)

Cassie Graham recalls this situation vividly.

H.H.: Did that go on much in the close?

C.G.: Aye ... bloody awful ... an' it wis gas mantles on the stair an' the boyfriend wis always gettin' intae a row for breakin' the mantles.

H.H.: How would he break the mantle?

C.G.: Deliberate.

(Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

Pubescent women in inter-war Port Glasgow walked a fine line between indulging in traditional courting pastimes to secure the rite of passage into marriage and motherhood, and becoming a 'fallen woman'. They were victims of the need to find personal space and freedom through this very rite of passage. Many young women who became pregnant in this way found themselves cast out of the family home, even if only for a short time. They were casualties of the eco-moral-nomics of the time that said that pregnancy out of wedlock was not simply adding a financial burden to an already stretched household budget, but threatened the respectability of the family.

These young single mothers were victims of the "Venus of the ash-pits" syndrome (Glasser 1986:78). Having prepared the close for the possibility of a "lod" at the dancing and in the greater plan of things of marriage and family security, many young women were exploited by men simply pursuing their carnal desires.

> Even years n' years ago there wid be someb'dy at the dancin', and they'd hardly ever get danced, this wis the joke, an' the fellas wis on the wan side and the lassies wis at the other an' very often ye usually always knew wan another. An' eh came tae the last waltz, sure as God there wid mibbe be two made run for wan person [woman] an' the joke wis, och eh, Ah might be lucky enough an' have an hour or so in the close, see whit Ah mean, human nature, human nature, human nature, but possibly makin' for somebody they thought wis, oh, easy.
> (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:17)

Under such circumstances, where family honour and financial security were under threat, not only the parents took an active interest in what their daughters got up to in the close. Brothers and the extended family also displayed their concerns.

> 'Coorse, years an' years ago ye used tae get the odd dark-horse y'know, somebody that wis on the lookout. An' amb'dy that wis amb'dy used tae guard their sisters like mad. 'Cause Ah mine o' Tontie [Hendry] sayin' tae me wan time for fun when Joe wid come up the stair he wid, oh my God, he wid mibbe turn tae Andy, 'Oh, hello Andy,' an' he wid say tae Annie, 'Annie, it's gettin' kina late,

> d'ye know think it's gettin' kina late?' He didn't waant tae spoil a winchin' couple ... There's some fella's honour, full o' honour. Lovely men, an' other wans no', know whit Ah mean. An' Ah think he'd want tae know that everything [was alright]. An' Ah think the most o' brothers would be gled in a way whenever their sisters ... is married. (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:17)

In the days before the welfare state, promoting social security for those individuals and families facing hardship, to find oneself without provision meant in many cases ruin.

Yet, despite the obvious socio-economic dangers of close-winching and despite the fact that it was public and unromantic, the close was the most common place for winching couples when they were unable to afford anywhere more attractive. There is no way of knowing just how many winching couples were attempting to make use of a particular close at any given time in inter-war Port Glasgow. But, with large families being the norm we must assume there was strong competition for space among the courting cohort.

4.5.4 First Come, First Served or Pre-Booked Performances

The battles for winching spots would not be fought on the stair landings, for no-one would dare stand outside a neighbour's door canoodling. Although there was an understanding among young couples that absolute privacy for canoodle was never guaranteed, there was a limit to how much public gaze they would expose themselves to. And we can safely assume that the very public moral code followed by most working class tenement dwellers would not allow parents to tolerate non-family members winching outside their door. These spots were, on a common understanding, reserved for family and would have been maintained so by parents who wished to monitor their daughters' courting rituals.

The contest for places would take place in the close lobby leading to the first flight of stairs and on the back stair. This was neutral territory and attracted couples from other closes and streets in the hope that it was free for them to use. Margaret O'Donaghue's experience told her that the notion of neutral territory did not always work. Some felt that they had seniority over others when it came to finding somewhere to stand, and Margaret recalls an occasion when her right to occupy the back stair space with her lod was questioned by a competitor.

> A lassie came in wan time [Honeymoon Terrace close] an' she turned roon' an' she says 'Oh,' she says, 'you're standing in ma corner.' 'How, how?' 'Well,' she says, 'Ah'm engaged an' you're no'!' (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:16)

Of course, this not only confirms that there existed a demand-led market for courting spots in Port Glasgow's closes in the 1930s, a class of itinerant winchers who, on cold winter nights, had to walk the streets in search of a vacant spot in a strange close, was subsequently created. For these young hopefuls, empty back stairs were snapped up on a "first come, first served" basis. Some nights they would prove to be lucky and the much sought-after spot at the rear of the girl's own close would be left vacant. For others, such good fortune would in any case have to be passed up in the hope of finding refuge elsewhere.

> Wans hid their certain places tae stan'. An' here there wis wan in the next close an' her father was mad. It was Lawrie an' she wis winchin' a Catholic. An' whit she used tae dae, she used tae no' go in her own close, she'd come in oors an' up where Cissy Guilly went, Cissy Guilly stood wi' Farmer up the stair a bit. (Margaret O'Donaghue SA1997:16)

What these last two quotes show is that among the young courting set there was the idea of a pecking order, even if it did not always hold true, which evolved out of the confines of overcrowded housing. More importantly, these courting couples were not

indulging in clandestine meetings and courting rituals snatched in the best available place whenever the opportunity arose. It was participated in and was conducted in the fashion of a tradition not unlike in its purpose the North European and Hebridean courting tradition of bundling.

4.5.5 The European Dimension

In the Island community of Lewis in 1933, supervised courting was a very elaborate and traditional ritual. "On that bleak windswept coast it would be difficult for two people to make love out of doors. So the young man goes to the girl's house. Again, with one living room where the family are sitting, it is difficult to make love. The girl goes into the sleeping-room. There is no fire there, nor any light, because the burning of tallow candles and oil is a consideration to people who are poor. So, for warmth, the girl goes to bed. Once in bed, both her legs are inserted into one large stocking, which her mother ties above the knees. Then the young man goes into the sleeping-room and lies beside her. It is called 'the bundling'."[6]

This ritual had its equivalent in eighteenth and nineteenth century northern European rural communities in Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Finland, where the spatial organisation of the communities could be seen to influence the way bundling manifested itself. "Once inside, the boy would remove his coat, hat, and shoes before getting into bed with the girl. If it were his first visit, he would probably spend the night atop the covers; if he knew her well, he would climb beneath the covers, yet retain socks and certainly shirt and pants. Only if the couple had informally agreed upon an engagement

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[6] Quoted from Bennett (1992:94).

would he take off all his clothes and make love to her. In the absence of an engagement, little intimacy was permitted. They would lie in bed, her head atop his outstretched arm, or perhaps with arms wrapped about each other, yet no skin touching. Custom required that he not fall asleep, and if his arm did so ... he was permitted to change sides with her, observing rules of propriety. Now, this lying together was not without eroticism ... Yet, the unengaged couple's legs were not to touch, and under no circumstances was coitus permitted. The real purpose of the visit was not sex but conversation, permitting the participants to make some personal assessment of potential partners."[7]

Wikman's research further explains the European bundling tradition and shows that for different communities, different variations of the tradition existed. "Within those areas of Europe where bundling was to be found at all, we see the hand of the community preventing sexual irregularity. Where settlement was dispersed, local youths had to constitute themselves in formal organisations to supervise the bundlers; where settlement was concentrated such organisations were unnecessary and youths went night-courting individually, because the community as a whole was able informally to supervise the goings-on. Thus the proximity in which families were thrust together would affect in several ways the nature of their relationship to the surrounding communities."[8]

It could be said that the urban winching tradition within the close and on the stair landings outside the family dwellings also witnessed a system of regulation. We have seen above how fathers would regularly check to see that the courting couple had not

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[7] Wikman (1937:287); quoted from Shorter (1975:108).
[8] Wikman (1937:264); quoted from Shorter (1975:54).

gravitated towards the darker and dimly lit spots of the landing. The back stairs were, of course, out of view of the parents, but the system of regulation performed by the community as a whole in the rural setting described by Wikman had its match in the very busy, extremely inhospitable, and public nature of the close. The volume of children to be found constantly playing in the close served to make intimacy difficult.

As we have already seen, many couples were forced to look for a secluded spot at some distance from their own close where their parents', friends' and neighbours' ability to monitor their goings-on would be impaired. In the summer months courting invariably took place elsewhere, e.g. on a walk to the hills or towards Langbank. And, realistically, if a couple were determined to be intimate and indulge in premarital sex, they were, like young couples in any social setting, not short on ingenuity. The difficulty this posed to females in the more anonymous setting of the urban sprawl was that, unlike in the rural setting, there was a greater ability for the male to disappear into the community denying responsibility. Some would argue that the urban tradition of close winching was one where "no one approved, few openly disapproved. Fatalistically, all connived." (Glasser 1986:78)

4.5.6 Winching and Marriage

So, women's lives were not devoid of entertainment. Their experience of winching rituals, which was linked to entertainment and was a form of entertainment in its own right, was for some comprehensive. Margaret O'Donaghue's experience told her that it was not unusual for women to play a pre-emptive role in the winching ritual. Dancing and other commercial pastimes like cinema-going did not always end when marriage took place, but sometimes this was the case and in most situations they were pursued

very much less frequently. Money of course became even tighter in marriage and when the first child arrived socialising in this way became almost impossible for the mothers. The men were never short of ideas for entertainment and some could be more expensive than others. Like rowing and billiards male pastimes were competitive and were pursued with a measure of seriousness and skill. They were not always conducive to family involvement and sometimes they could be to the detriment of the family resources.

H.H.: Did ye dae a lot o' gamblin' in them days?

P.C.: Och, there wis gamblin' schools doon at the Red Bridge as we called it ... the Iron Bridge for the railway takin' the trucks across the mouth o' the harbour. Well, there wis always two or three schools, banker schools or ... toad-in-the-hole, y'know.

H.H.: Who ran these then, was there somebody organising it?

P.C.: Naw, there wir mibbe the corner boys, the Church Street boys, the [League of the] Cross boys as they called them an' ... mibbe two schools o' them, two schools o' George Street boys. N' eh they had tae hiv a ... dogger watchin' for the polis. See, it's illegal to play cards or gamblin'. Sometimes they got caught, the dogger was away somewhere else, n' the polis wid come doon the street an' catch them.

H.H.: What would happen?

P.C.: The dogger got ... [done in] See, if it wis a swipe, whit they called a swipe, if the dealer .. say it was banker an' there seven or eight packs oot n' the banker turns up an ace, that was whit they called a swipe. Well, the dogger got a shillin', mibbe two bob. Every swipe the bank had ye had tae pay the dogger.

H.H.: What would happen if the polis caught them?

P.C.: Confiscate the money an' the cards an' they'd be brought up before the magistrate, mibbe fined ten bob or somethin'.
(Paddy Collins SA1998:13)

Gambling, even if only for coppers, was detrimental to the overall domestic money situation, and hard-pushed mothers could well do without husbands gambling what little cash they had. Of course, expectations between the sexes in 1930s Port Glasgow were

indicative of the time and cultural context. The axiom that said that men were the breadwinners and that that gained them certain rights, like having little to do with the household management and the family, gave them a freedom outside the home that allowed them to pursue "manly" pastimes which included gambling. The consequence was that women needed to be able to cope with a number of matters at any one time. McGuckin (1992:198) states that "historically they have also been in the frontline over the provision of services at a local level." Women in inter-war Port Glasgow had to deal with landlords, factors, council officials, shopkeepers, pawnbrokers and their agents in order to sustain the family and protect respectability. Cockburn too (1977:163) argues that "alongside the struggle at the point of production, in the mines and factories, there is a struggle at the point of consumption in the schools, in housing estates, in the street and in the family."

> Big families, it wis the women that suffered, the men walked out. The men all stood at street corners in thai days, never were in the house, the women had the whole worry and the family to look after. A man wouldn't have taken a wean out in them days, wouldn't dream o' it. Be the talk o' the town if a man went out wi' a pram in thae days. (Cassie Graham SA1990:115)

Women like Cassie looked after their children as expected and forwent any claim they might otherwise have had to organised post marital entertainment.

> When ye had a crowd o' weans ... ye hadn't much time for anythin' else. (Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

4.6 A Saturday Night Stroll

At least one pre-marriage pastime persisted into married life to take on almost ritualistic proportions. Couples going for a walk was a very common pastime after

marriage and it was one means of enjoyment which afforded space for the whole family to experience enjoyment together.

> Saturday night ... ye went round the town on a Saturday night ... ye'd get yer supper about half past five, six o'clock. Then mibbe you and your wife an' the weans would come out about half past seven, eight o'clock, walk right roon the town, roon aw the shops, see if there were any bargains, you know, shops were open until ten o'clock at that time ... Aye, ten or eleven o'clock at night ... aye, ye'd go intae Murray's n' get fruit, up Princes Street, doon Princes Street, Church Street, intae the M n' M shop that ... sold chocolate ... go in and get sweeties there, everybody was in there, ye would meet hunners o' people, y'know, n' we'd stan' talkin' tae them for five or ten minutes ... b'the time ye got home it was eleven o'clock, half past eleven at night ... ye see they were more together, the people at that time. (Paddy Collins SA1998:13)

This Saturday night family outing served a very necessary purpose. It allowed Paddy's wife to buy foodstuffs for Sunday that they would otherwise not have access to, since shops closed on Sunday, and they had no facility for keeping fresh food stored in the house from Saturday until meal time on Sunday. Of course, as Paddy himself remarked, food could be bought cheaper at this late hour. But, this does not take anything away from the fact that this was one of the few times the family went anywhere as a unit and took enjoyment from this. Not only would the adults meet and talk with friends, the children too would meet their friends. And, not only would necessary foodstuffs be bought, Saturday was pay-day and the children would have treats bought for them.

There are many popular images of Saturday nights in Port Glasgow's town centre. As in other shipbuilding towns and industrial urban centres, pubs and dance halls featured largely with drunken men spilling onto the streets at closing time. Such scenes were very real and the images have not been fabricated. However, little is recorded to focus in the popular mind the image of working class families walking round Port Glasgow's town centre on a Saturday night, participating in a pastime which required no organisation and

was comparable to the pastimes of Scottish industrial towns of an earlier period.

> The fact that Saturday was a prelude to a day of leisure gilded the short hours of it that he [Irish navvie] had to himself and made it a stretch of relaxation that he much appreciated ... the streets of Victorian towns in Scotland exercised an irresistible pull on the working class in the evenings when the days work was done. It was a species of escapism in the literal sense from their dreich homes ... the narrow streets were chocked with a push and pull of pedestrians, elbowing, boring and making their way through knots of idle loungers or groups around the lighted windows of the shops which often remained open until midnight. (Handley 1970:160)

Handley's observation highlights the needs of the Irish navvies being served by late night strolls around the streets, shopping for essential foodstuffs on pay-day, escaping the cramped and unhealthy homes they lived in and enjoying a form of relaxation. The late night walking also served the purpose of socialisation. The town housed a large proportion of the overall population, many of whom were bound together by family ties as well as by ethnicity, culture and religion. This single act served to maintain the notion of neighbourliness which was so regularly crucial to the well-being and survival of each individual family. Saturday night walks were special because normal leisure and recreation time was very definitely gender-orientated.

4.7 Women and Children First

> A lot o' them [young married mothers] used tae go out wi' oul'er women, young women like, woulda went doon tae the quay wi' the weans, sat doon at the breakwater. Used tae get their entertainment doon there. (Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

4.7.1 Quayside Creche

For Cassie and many other young mothers, entertainment or pleasure was drawn from this mixture of companionship with older women and their relationship with their

children. If there was no alternative to looking after the children themselves, then there was a great deal to be had from congregating into what might be called the original "mothers and toddlers groups". When Cassie and her friends and neighbours met down at the quay with their children, they were doing more than simply being social (cf. Appendix Figure 47). They were relying on one another for a break away from the demands of the children and domestic routine. In these moments of female camaraderie, a mother could relax her guard and be less vigilant over her children. They were now in the gaze of other mothers who were equally concerned for their neighbours' children as for their own. In these moments of relaxation, Cassie could afford herself the luxury of thinking about matters other than the necessary and the mundane. She could join with her friends in gossip and local news and she could have fun. If needs be, then such gatherings allowed mothers not only to release their minds from the emotional strains of life, but to leave their children in the care of neighbours and family to go and attend to other matters. On the other hand, if the routine and the mundane things in her life were troublesome and her burdens were heavier than usual, she could share her worries about her husband, about employment, money, and housing with those who intimately understood her situation through their own experiences. These gatherings were not organised as an event; rather, there was an understanding that, weather permitting, there would be a gathering around the quay.

4.7.2 Back Court Entertainment

Meetings for the purpose of companionship and entertainment were not isolated events, but some were more spontaneous than others.

C.G.: Well, Ah've seen in the summer nights, the good summer nights, the women used tae take chairs oot tae the top o' George Street an' sit in them tae two n' three in the mornin', singin' and tellin' stories ... Some great singers among them. They enjoyed themselves in their own way.

H.H.: What kin' o' stories would they be telling?

C.G.: Ghost stories mostly. Then ye're feart tae go home.

H.H.: Did they do this on a regular basis?

C.G.: Naw, jist noo an' again. Somebody would take a chair oot an before ye know there'd be half a dozen oot. It wis a wild street then ... an' still everybody was happy in their own way. The weans used tae play them rounders games in the street in the summer nights till it got dark y' know, dusky bluebells, hunch-cuddy-hunch, kick-the-can ... amused themselves.

H.H.: An' the mothers?

C.G.: They'd be standin' watchin' like, standin' at the tap o' the street watchin'. Aye, but Ah liked it there. (Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

Children were often the catalystic force bringing women together, whether it was a gathering at the quay side or on the streets (cf. Appendix Figure 48). Since mothers were largely responsible for their children's welfare and supervision, methods of attaining pleasure and entertainment evolved for them which were inextricably linked to their children's pastimes.

> In the Bay Area, it was all balconies an' the neighbours all used tae sit oot on the balconies in chairs in the summer evenings anyway, talkin' n' big families roon' them, that was their pleasure, hivin' their families roon' them.
> (Cassie Graham SA1990:114)

Inevitably in this situation, the children were affected by having adults around on the street watching them play whilst indulging in their own forms of entertainment, whether through song or simply talking or, as was often the case, through dance.

> Neillie's father [Josie's father-in-law] was awful good at the button-keyed accordion an' they lived doon beside St. John's chapel in Shore Street. Well, where they lived it wis lik' a wee kin' o' cul-de-sac ... the houses were all round

the back green. An' in the summer time he used tae, he was on the bottom flat, he used tae lift up the winda an' sit at the winda playin' all these tunes n' aw the neighbours used tae come out the back dancin'. They wid aw be dancin' n' he be sittin' playin' away at this button-keyed accordion. (Josie Watson SA1997:27)

Children and teenagers were as much a part of their mothers' world of entertainment as mothers were of theirs (cf. Appendix Figure 49). Spontaneous outdoor methods of adult entertainment were traditional and children were encouraged to participate in the custom.

C.G.: An' ye know how we learnt tae dance ... you wouldn't mind George Street?

H.H.: Aye, Ah dae, just vaguely.

C.G.: D'ye min' the big close at the tap ... we all learned tae dance in there ... the oul'er wans learnt ye, the younger wans, tae a mouth organ, that was the music.

H.H.: What kind o' dance was it?

C.G.: Pride o' Erin an' all them wans. The first wan Ah ever learned, Ah wis about thirteen at the time ... eh, whit ye call that - Hesitation Waltz. An' they'd words tae it. [sings] Forward and back, forward and back, step, step, glide and glide, back, back, back and dip, tralla lala lala. That wis how we learnt tae dance, tae folk music.

H.H.: Did all the young women learn tae dance like that?

C.G.: Most of them in the Station Road in the big wide pen [close] in the Station Road. An' we used tae go up the Public Park, there used tae be a band stand and we used tae go up there on a Sunday night, some o' the young fellas woulda had a mouth organ, mostly mouth organs, and then word would come round that the polis wis gonnie raid it. Ye wurn't allowed tae go, wurn't daein' no harm, just dancin', but somebody must have complained. (Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

4.7.3 Making Pleasure an Art Form

> People are obliged to live their lives in whatever circumstances they find themselves and that is a process of psychological as well as physical survival. ... The majority simply accepted the circumstances and adapted their expectations to what was available. They extracted much fun from small pleasures and deep satisfactions from modest achievements and possessions. (Lummis 1987:20)

The inter-war period and especially the late 1920s and early 1930s was a period of social and economic inconsistency. The contradiction of unemployment and misery for some and rising standards of work and play for others created a paradoxical, bitter-sweet atmosphere. It had more of an edge in the larger centres where the opposing forces of this contradiction had more occasion to clash. In Port Glasgow, where the whole community depended upon the same industry, these contradictions were not perhaps so conspicuous. Nevertheless, generally at this time, Portonians were participating in dance like others more acutely aware of the materialistic contradictions around them, and fulfilling one of the most widely believed functions of social dance by shutting out the harsh economic and social realities of life. The fact that singing and dancing in Port Glasgow's Bay Area streets was a pastime for both mothers and children demonstrates that working class women were the least likely to experience any of the apparent benefits of the inter-war period in the field of leisure and recreation. Marjory Spring-Rice (1939:58) concluded her study into the subject of working class wives' health and living conditions by stating:

> The working class mother with a large family more than any other group had little time or money for leisure, especially if her situation was compounded by the unemployment of her spouse ... Hours would be spent in the home fending for husband and children often in conjunction with marginal paid employment leaving very few hours for recreation.

Mothers were expected to be responsible for all the domestic management, and they understood that organised entertainment would not form a large part of their social scene. They also understood that the tradition of making their own entertainment in the evenings on the balconies and back courts of their tenement streets was well established. They extracted social intercourse from their meetings with other mothers in the same

situation, whilst minding the home and watching over the children.

There is a belief that the family is in terminal decline, that society is becoming increasingly fragmented and that we are becoming less family orientated in favour of individualism. As we experience changes in our own life and community, we may find ourselves in sympathy with this view. However, some would argue that these changes are as natural as life itself and that society is a dynamic and unstoppable force. Advocates of change can point to the many advances that have been made by mothers over the generations. So, we may lament the passing of those things we considered good in the past whilst welcoming the many achievements which have been brought about by change. What we cannot do is dissect society at the point of change and opt to carry forward the bits we like, for that point in time often comes and goes without being noticed. Only the passing of time and the analysis of history allows us the luxury of pinpointing elements of the past which, with hindsight, we consider unfortunately lost to progress. And in any case, the minutiae of life cannot be weeded out to leave only the good bits. Life comes as a package with both desirable and undesirable elements which are equally necessary for society to remain dynamic.

Working class mothers in Port Glasgow today experience life in a very different way from those in the inter-war period. They are in some cases the benefactors of battles fought in these earlier years for women's rights and freedoms. We can argue that women's lives are qualitatively better now. But we must also recognise that new pressures exist today which make life often as problematic for women, if not more so. Rising living standards and better career opportunities bring with them new levels of expectation. There are noticeable differences in what women expect today in terms of

entertainment and worthwhile pastimes compared with the previous generation. So it was with Cassie and her contemporaries when they questioned their own mothers on the same issue.

In the knowledge that their mother had struggled with hardships to make ends meet to provide for and preserve a large family, Cassie and her sisters were surprised to discover that she too had wrought pleasures and entertainment from her life.

> When Ah look back Ah haven't had a bad life. Annie [Cassie's sister] says, 'For God's sake maw, what pleasure ever did you have?' 'Och well,' she says, 'Ah always had youse.' Her family, that was all she wanted. She thought she had a good life because she had her family around her.
> (Cassie Graham SA1990:115)

Chapter Five

ASPECTS OF ROMAN CATHOLIC HISTORY IN PORT GLASGOW

5.1 Port Glasgow's Catholic History

> Even without the strictures of the church it was the most natural thing in the world that the immigrant Irish should seek out the companionship of their compatriots. (Murray 1985:96-97)

In the years preceding the famine and hunger inflicted upon the Irish labouring classes in 1845, Port Glasgow had no Catholic population to speak of. However, available documentation records that the area was not devoid of Catholics and, more significantly, was not without religious instruction, guidance and leadership. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the upheaval of the French Revolution caused many French priests to flee the country and take refuge among more hospitable Catholic communities in neighbouring countries. Some moved further afield to countries where Catholicism was not prominent or practised in any organised fashion to set up missions. The British Isles attracted some of the French emigré priests and Scotland with its Presbyterian establishment but harbouring pockets of Catholicism, enticed a few to settle and establish missions (anon. 1954:X).

This availability of priests coincided with the period when the Industrial Revolution, was having its impact on large-scale demographic change in Scotland. Towns like Port Glasgow and more significantly in this earlier period, Greenock, attracted labour from across Scotland. Greenock attracted Highlanders who were witnessing a major transformation of their traditional crofting and cattle raising economy following the introduction of sheep farming by landowners and clan chiefs.

Driven from the land by these new ideas, Highlanders were dispersed to seek a means of livelihood elsewhere. Some were assisted to sail to the "New World" of North America, but many were forced to settle in the industrialising Lowlands and survive in the developing urban towns like Greenock and Port Glasgow.

Highland-born inhabitants of Greenock 1741-1921

	1741	1755	1791	1801	1851	1871	1891	1921
Greenock Population	4,100	3,858	14,299	17,458	37,436	57,146	63,423	81,123
Number of Highlanders	c.370	c.410	c.4,300	c.5,100	4,124	5,178	3,810	2,497
Percentage of Highlanders	9.0	11.0	30.0	29.0	11.0	9.1	6.0	3.1

Table 15[1]

5.2 A Hibernian Closed Shop

Irish labourers also arrived in Greenock and Port Glasgow in the early years of the nineteenth century to find work in the mills, docks and mercantile businesses flourishing around the shipping trade. By the 1840s they where arriving in numbers to labour and work in various occupations. They claimed the sugar factories and mills of the area as their own.

> The Irish in Greenock and Port Glasgow were of the labouring class. Among them were a few small shopkeepers dealing in cloth, second hand goods and provisions and many itinerant hawkers. The rest worked as stevedores at the docks, as labourers in the foundries and paper mill and at the building trade. A considerable number were ships' carpenters and others were engaged by the farmers in the neighbourhood on agricultural improvements. They had almost a monopoly of the work in the sugar industry of the town. Out of 400 persons employed in the sugar factories at least 350 were Irish. The natives could not

[1] Flinn 1977:475

> endure the conditions of the work there. Only the Irish could stand the heat... With the exception of about 50 Scots, all the 1200 employees at the hand-loom weaving factory and bleaching establishment at Port Glasgow were Irish. (Handley 1964:51-52)

So numerous were the Irish workers in the sugar warehouses of both these towns at this time that the business earned itself the sobriquet "a Hibernian closed shop" (O'Tuathaigh 1986:158). Many of these labourers were Catholic, and their arrival provided an opportunity for the church to strengthen its rather weak foothold in Scottish society. They were compelled to take charge of this new congregation as indigenous Scots viewed their arrival with some concern.

As well as showing a lack of church discipline the Irish tended to be among the regular perpetrators of unsocial behaviour. This would, in later years, be regarded as the inevitable consequence of their poor socio-economic circumstances, but many contemporaries explained their behaviour as characteristic of an inferior intelligence, incapable or unwilling to learn. Scottish priests reporting to their bishops were exasperated by the Irish Catholic's inability, as they saw it, to grasp the opportunity Scotland offered them to learn about the ways of the church. "In religious matters they are nearly all without exception more or less deplorably ignorant and what is worse unwilling to be instructed." (SCA:BL6/540/10/1)

The notion of the stupid Irishman was evidently not the exclusive property of working class Protestants. This was a badge of identity given to the Irish by the majority culture. It reflected a body of opinion that the Irish were to blame for the squalor in which they lived, arriving in numbers to work in low paid, unskilled jobs and take up residence in the poorest accommodation they could find in these centres of industry in Scotland. "It would be an interesting subject for discussion to pause and ask who made the slums of Greenock? Just as bricks and stones, slates and

plaster cannot make a home, no more can they make a slum...let it be frankly said that large sections of the people were content with low standards of housing and there was the tradition of low rents, not because of poverty but because they placed greater importance on the various luxuries and superfluities of life." (Hamilton 1947:23,35)

The author does not expand on the nature of these "luxuries and superfluities" but one can assume there is at least passing reference to the attraction of alcohol to the poor. Hamilton was among the many at this time who believed alcohol was strictly the cause and not the effect of poverty.

What cannot be questioned is the attraction to immigrant settlers of being closely situated to fellow incomers: "Strangers in a strange land tend to congregate out of a feeling of kinship and for protection. Forming communities in exile, Irish districts retained a separate identity even when a majority of the inhabitants were locally born. The immigrant communities were well defined and, within them, Irish nationalism, Irish culture and the Catholic Faith were carefully nurtured." (Hunt 1981:159)

There was an absolute necessity on the part of the church to muster these immigrants into some form of organised religious unit responsible to an identifiable leadership. There can be no doubt that the numbers of Irish Catholic immigrants coming into Scotland in the middle of the nineteenth century, swelled the Catholic population beyond the indigenous Catholic leadership's ability to reasonably control them, especially since the immigrants were settling in areas of the country where the indigenous Catholic Church was poorly represented. It was necessary to bring priests to Scotland to assist in administering the sacraments of the church to its expanding

congregations and consequently through organised control, address the fears of some of the native population.

Irish-Born Enumerated in Scotland 1861-1931

Year	Both sexes	Intercensal Increase/decrease	% of total population
1861	204,083	-	6.66
1871	207,770	+3,687	6.18
1881	218,745	+10,975	5.86
1891	194,807	-23,938	4.84
1901	205,064	+10,257	4.59
1911	174,715	-30,349	3.67
1921	159,020	-15,695	3.26
1931	124,296	-34,724	2.57

Table 16[2]

5.3 A Chance to Install Order

> Had the immigrant Irish arrived with the best will in the world, their situation would have been desperate enough, coming as they did with their poverty and disease and uprooted from the only life they knew; but instead they came with a culture and set of beliefs that set them completely apart from the native Scots. (Murray 1985:96-97)

The Irish labourers who helped fuel the Industrial Revolution in towns like Port Glasgow brought their own belief structures with them. This was of concern to "native Scots" too, but it was more worrying for the Scottish Catholic authorities. If these immigrants were not strict adherents to the rules of the church in Ireland, they were bound to be even more of a concern to the Catholic Church in Scotland. Yet, the Irish were not completely ignorant of the church's attempts to reform the traditional beliefs and practices common in Ireland and the relationship of Irish Catholics with the

[2] Census for Scotland 1931 Vol II

church. "The nineteenth century has been identified as the period during which the religious attitudes and behaviour constituting the distinctive religious pattern of contemporary Irish society were shaped. It was in that century that the Tridentine pattern of religious practice which was centred on regular sacramental practice based on sufficient catechetical instruction within the framework of the parish under the direction of the parish priest, with the bishop as the lynch-pin of the system, became firmly established throughout Ireland." (Corish 1985:103).

Here we see the church imposing a new and radical system of church organisation upon the Catholics of Ireland. For generations the Catholic Church had been moving towards an up-dated system of government to cope with the changing and often turbulent political situation across Europe since the beginning of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. The old ways of monastic orders could not compete with the scripture-based Protestant teaching. The Tridentine system of parish organisms was created around a congregation of bishops and priests. Yet, in Ireland as with other countries of inhospitable terrain and far-flung communities, the practical difficulties of implementing the new system and instituting the parish structure were considerable. "While the church endeavoured to organise itself along Tridentine lines the bulk of the population had little or at the most intermittent clerical guidance during much of that period." (Corish 1985:135-6).

As a result of the obvious difficulties the church experienced in reaching the flock in Ireland, their programme of converting the faithful to the new, more European style of church organisation and worship was prosecuted rather haphazardly. Those in the populated centres of the country were subject to these teachings, whilst those in out-lying areas were difficult to reach and less well catered for. Rural Irish

Catholics regarded themselves as members of the universal flock but they adhered to their own traditional belief. Naturally enough, this precipitated a mixture of old and new, a combination of Roman Catholic rite and folk belief. Their "system" bore the hallmarks of adherence to a belief structure handed down from previous generations. It met their daily and seasonal spiritual needs springing from their immediate working and living environment and sustained a belief in weather lore, the "little people" and fairy lore, second sight and so on. These were practices the church authorities were keen to drive out, but struggled with the natural barriers the land placed in their path. It was largely these rural tradition bearers who arrived in Scotland. In Scotland's industrialising towns and cities the Irish missionary priests were able to exploit the situation to provide the basis for the development of more church-centred congregations, which later religious leaders both local and national would exploit to promote the Catholic cause.

As we have already heard, it was the scattered and difficult to access nature of rural Irish population that stifled the Church's attempts to educate them in new ways. In Scotland they were conveniently huddled together in the urban spaces. This gave the Irish missionaries a greater chance of a educating this previously detached group. It also provided the Scottish Hierarchy with the means to exploit the full range of church based organisations in their campaign to bring the immigrant Irish Catholics into line with modern Catholic thinking. In the last decade of the nineteenth century Archbishop Eyre took advantage of the work of the Vincentian, Passionist, Marist and Jesuit missions which arrived to organise the Irish settlers in Scotland between 1858-1865, to set up local branches of The League of the Cross, St Vincent de Paul Society and the Catholic Young Men's Society (Aspinwall 1982:45). Assimilation

over time between Irish and Scottish priests, if not between Irish and Scottish cultures, was effected. Apart from the very necessary motive of bringing the Irish under control, so as not to upset the established order, which in turn could make the Catholic Church's precarious foothold in Scotland even more unstable there was the prize to the church of adding many souls to its small Scottish enclave. The restoration of the hierarchy in 1878 served to assist the cause of harmony among the ranks of the Catholic Bishops and clergy in Scotland and add impetus to their greater goal of establishing the church in Scotland's industrial heartlands.

5.4 The Mission: a Secular Crusade

When the Rev. John Carolan, a native of Drogheda, Co. Louth, was despatched to Port Glasgow in 1846, he was neither a novice priest nor was he assigned the task of entering into virgin territory. Since the early years of the nineteenth century, the small Catholic population in Port Glasgow had been receiving the sacraments of the mass from French missionary priests operating in the area. The earliest available church record indicates that in the years before Father Davidson established the church of St Mary's in Greenock in 1808, there were two French émigré priests teaching and administering Catholic rites in the area. Fathers Capran and Le Moine had settled in the town and were attempting to establish a Catholic community (anon. 1929:12).

Father Davidson (1808-1815) was followed into the parish of St. Mary's in Greenock by Rev. Michael Ryan (1815-1833). Both these priests travelled regularly to attend "a Catholic congregation in Port Glasgow". It is not known how big the congregation

was, but the Rev. W. Gordon, who took over the incumbency in 1833, estimated that Port Glasgow sustained a Catholic population of 369 out of a total population of close to 5192 (anon. 1954:x). At 7% of the population the Catholics represented a small minority and, of course, we cannot assume that all of those 369 souls were practising Catholics. There was, after all, no church for them to attend and little visible organisation. And it is questionable just how predisposed the Irish in general were to church-centred religious observances. The Rev. Paul MacLachlan, reporting to the Bishop from Falkirk in 1847, certainly encountered difficulty convincing the immigrant population in that area of the merits of regular church attendance. "A very considerable portion of the temporary residents here seldom come to church at all. They are never heard of unless they are seeking alms or have a child to be baptised, or fall sick and then send for the priest. The great majority of my congregation have come from Ireland within the last five or six years, many indeed within the last ten months." (SCA:BL6/540/10/1)

Even considering their indifference to attending mass the poor Irish Catholics needed the priest. Industrial Scotland was an unhealthy place for the poor and the destitute and the Irish necessarily found themselves among this lowest and most vulnerable social group in Scotland's industrial towns (cf. Appendix Figure 50).

The priest had to be more than a figure of spiritual authority. He was often a social crusader battling on the behalf of his parishioners at a time when state and local government protection from poverty and the health hazards of these emerging capitalist industrial towns, such as tuberculosis and typhus and other diseases associated with polluted living conditions, was inadequate. The Commissioners working to produce the *Report on the Poor Law in Scotland* in 1844 came across

gross negligence and despair as a result of meagre resources to assist the poor and the sick in industrial centres. It was found that Glasgow Infirmary was actually shipping its Highland and Irish patients down the Clyde on boats bound for their respective homelands. These patients were, however, routinely disembarked at Greenock because they had no fare for the full journey and were forced to stay in their poor and sickly condition in whatever hovel they could secure shelter. It was also found that the Infirmary in Greenock, which served the Port, regularly turned its patients out before they were recovered, unable to work and in a state of penury (anon. 1844:559).

Port Glasgow also featured in the specific cases of penury brought to the attention of the Commissioners. Frederick Gordon, surgeon in Port Glasgow, told the commissioners of the circumstances of a case, which he believed was coming to typify the consequences of poverty and incomers to the Port in 1843. "I remember about two months ago, a woman from Edinburgh, whom I was called upon to see, sitting on a grocer's stair. She had the fever; no one in our town could be found to take her into his house. We then sent her to Greenock infirmary; but she was refused admittance, because it was too full. She returned to us and at length was received by a married man who had a large family. All the family took the fever, and the wife and one of the children died of it. The man was an Irish labourer, who was in ordinary circumstances at the time." (anon. 1844:483)

It is not recorded if this Irish labourer took pity on a fellow incomer to the town and paid dearly for his sympathy, or if he was persuaded by the offer of parish assistance to take on the burden of this poor woman. If the latter interpretation is correct then it tells us something of the desperate nature of this Irish family, living in

"ordinary circumstances". Father Carolan worked in these conditions to help the poor and unhealthy flock he had been sent to administer the sacraments to. He was proclaimed a champion of the poor by those church members who contributed to the documented history of St John's Church. His spirituality and social crusading became as one in the minds of those they served and he, like other clergymen, became a focal point for all the ills of the congregation.

Father Carolan provides us with some insight into his daily ministry through his register of deaths during his time as priest to the congregation of St. John's. Its pages reveal a catalogue of cases common among the poor at that time. He noted the cause of death in 215 cases between 1846 and 1855. Consumption, chest complaints, decline and asthma accounted for 63 deaths; an undefined fever, probably typhus, persisted over the whole period and accounted for 45 more; two epidemics of cholera, one in 1849 and another in 1854 accounted for 12 and 34 deaths respectively. These statistics detail a grim reminder of the unhealthy surroundings in which the poor immigrants, fleeing from hunger and disease in their own country were, by reason of their poverty, compelled to live. They also provides us with an indication of the importance Father Carolan attached to detailing the nature of his parishioner's unhealthy condition (anon. 1954:2)[3].

[3] Cannon Canning, Parish priest of St John's and church historian, understands that Father Carolan's diaries formed part of the church's records, but recalls that they were lost or accidentally destroyed during one of the many renovations that have taken place in the church over recent years.

5.5 Carolan's Legacy

The influence Father Carolan had on this Irish Catholic community must have been great and his Irish background cannot be underestimated as a factor in this. In his short incumbency at St John's (1846-1851) he mustered his flock and supervised the building of a very ornate church to replace the house of worship they had established in a converted sail loft in Jock Ha's Close in the oldest quarter of the town around Customhouse Lane (cf. Appendix Figure 51).

The houses in Customhouse Lane were still inhabited in the early 1900s but were eventually demolished to make way for what became John Wood Street. The house in Jock Ha's Close would have been very small. It would at most have been a top or bottom apartment in what appears to have been a divided building. It may even have been no more than a single-end flat situated in the top or lower half of the house. It certainly could not have accommodated a sizeable congregation to hear mass.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to say whether the house accommodated all those wishing to hear mass, or whether more than one mass was said to accommodate the congregation. What is known on this point is that the immigrant Irish were not dedicated mass attenders, simply because they were not used to such organised religious worship[4]. However, by 1851, three years before St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church was blessed and opened by Bishop Murdoch on 24th October 1854, the total population of Port Glasgow had risen to 7000, almost 2000 more than in 1831. By 1871, this figure rose to 10823, more than double the 1831 number. The town and its Catholic population were expanding fast. The new church was designed

[4] Cf. Connolly (1985a, 1985b) and Corish (1985).

to seat 600 and to serve a parish of 2000 souls, almost exactly the number by which the town's population had increased in the period 1831-1851. This represents a five and a half times increase in the congregation over a period of 20 years.

Thus by the mid to late nineteenth century, the Port's Irish Catholic population were attending mass and supporting the church in sufficient numbers to allow for an ambitious building programme to proceed. "The erection of a church was for a long time under consideration, and a site was eventually secured in Shore Street. Our forefathers showed their glorious spirit, for the head of each family agreed to contribute £1 or as much more as he could afford - and this when the average weekly wage of the labourer was 10 shillings. During the erection of the church, the eastern gable was blown down but the men of the parish, when their own day's work was done, cleared away the ruins and the church was finally completed in 1854." (anon.1929:13)

Through the work of the parishioners under the direction of Father Carolan, a magnificent church was erected to replace the worship house in Jock Ha's Close (cf. Appendix Figure 52). The church has been described by commentators as very elaborate and ornate:

> The church is of the pointed Gothic, with a beautiful arched open roof. The couples rest on neatly finished corbels, and form an arch of 45 feet high. The roof is greatly admired and considered to be the most handsome of any of this style yet erected. The walls are buttressed all around, and four buttresses in front, graduated with water tables, end in beautiful octagonal spires about sixty feet high, neatly ornamented on top. It is lighted with eight Gothic windows in the sides and three in the front. The front doorway is elaborate and expensive – the window above it is highly wrought and is upwards of 16 feet high. Above it, and under the cross, there is a beautiful niche in which is a full-length statue of John the Baptist in the attitude of preaching, done by Nanetti, an Italian artist. It is considered by judges who saw it before being raised to the height where it now stands to be a finished piece of art. The alter recess is half a hexagon with four pillars having very ornamental capitals, from which springs

> a beautifully groined roof in canopy form. The arch of the alter recess is stately Gothic and has a very fine effect. On each side of the recess there is a Gothic window finished in stained glass. On one side is St Peter and on the other St Paul, and in the centre at a considerable height, is a large trefoil window with a dove. They are all finished elaborately and do great credit to the establishment of Mr Kearney, Glasgow. (anon. 1855:91-92) (cf. Appendix Figure 53)

The building programme instigated under Father Carolan did not suffer after he left the parish. Only six years after his departure a new school building was opened in the town's Chapel Lane and again attracted congratulatory comment in the *Scottish Catholic Directory* of 1861: "A handsome new school has lately been erected here on the property belonging to the church. It consists of two floors and both schools are used on Sundays - the one for boys, the other for girls." (anon. 1861:105) In 1883 this school was replaced by a more substantial building on the town's Balfour Street, and in 1888 a large addition to the presbytery was required to provide "comfortable accommodation" for the three priests, now serving the congregation. The cost of this development was £400 and this expense was met through "the generosity of members of the congregation" (anon. 1954:11). The speedy growth of the parish was such that by 1895 an extension of the church to accommodate another 400 seats was required to serve an increase in the size of the congregation to around 4000 (anon. 1954:11). Certainly, this estimation is verified by available statistics that show the Irish-born population in Port Glasgow to be already close to 4,000 by 1881 and we must not forget that these figures do not include the off-spring of these Irish inhabitants who, although born in Scotland, would be culturally Irish.

1881Census

	Total Population	Scots-born Population	Irish-born Population	Irish % of total Population
Port Glasgow	**13,294**	**9245**	**3710**	**28.0**
Glasgow	511,415	423,598	67,109	13.12
Greenock	66,704	53,021	10,717	16.06
Paisley	55,638	49,543	4,994	8.97
Govan	49,560	40,250	6958	14.03

Table 17[5]

The role of the priest in this development was central and was largely due to the pioneering work of Father Carolan. His spiritual leadership was crucial to the parishioners way of life, so much so that when he returned to Derry in 1857, the leading members of the congregation petitioned the Bishop to send a new priest to St. John's immediately. "Three years later Father Carolan returned to Ireland and for a time the parish was without a priest. The grand old pioneers of the faith were undaunted and a deputation, determined that Port Glasgow would still have a resident priest, persuaded Bishop Murdoch to send Rev. Thos. Robertson, a Banffshire man, to take charge." (anon. 1929:13)

5.6 Richness to Poor Lives

The Scottish bishops recognised the need to make the church the focal point in the daily as well as the spiritual lives of these new communities. The parish system would be the vehicle for this development, and the parish priest, in whom the power would lie for the direction each parish would take under the guidance of the bishops, would be the driver. At a time when people were without direction and in need of social and

[5] Census for Scotland 1881 Vol. II

economic assistance as well as or perhaps more than spiritual guidance, the help on offer through the parish organisation, even in its infancy, was welcomed by Irish Catholics in Port Glasgow. The bishops' task was to build churches and encourage the new Catholic population to attend in numbers.

The Irish Catholics arriving in Port Glasgow in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were claimed for the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland despite any misgivings the church authorities had about their religious practices and beliefs. For their part, the immigrants saw the church as a focal point for their needs and aspirations. Father Carolan's endeavours in Port Glasgow are testimony to this. The church was personalised through the erection of a place of worship and more importantly through the endeavours of the parish priest. The church was committed to providing a socio-religious framework for the Irish Catholics to work.

However, the church had its own agenda and it recognised that if anything constructive was to be achieved with the new congregations they had to be taught to adapt to their new surroundings and undergo a conversion to more orthodox Catholicism. A place of worship was a crucial factor in the success of this policy. It is not difficult to imagine how attractive a new church building would seem to the typical Catholic family living in the urban squalor which was Port Glasgow's town centre. They may not have been educated in the ways and rites of the church, but they could not help but be impressed by the fortitude of the parish priest and his endeavours on their behalf. The idea and the sight of a church being erected was welcome and tangible testimony to his work among them, not to underestimate the important role it played in providing real testimony to their own determination to survive under difficult circumstances. What the church building stood for was not just a spiritual presence, but

a sign to the outside world that the Catholic's of the Port were a permanent feature.

Apart from the aspect of pride in their own achievements, Port Glasgow's Catholics saw in the statues and images in the church something to which they could relate directly. We cannot underestimate the effect the imagery and splendour of the church had on them, nor the effect of the calm and serenity of the place. "The new spirituality imparted in Glasgow ... by the parochial missions boosted Catholic morale. The increased status of the parish priest, the strength of the parish sense, the renewed enthusiasm for colourful devotions in improved more ornate churches gave a richness to many poor lives. The emotional fulfilment of celebrations of the greater feasts, with their popular hymns, proved effective to maintain links with the mass of the faithful." (Aspinwall & McCaffrey 1984:137)

5.7 Priests, Language and Traditions

5.7.1 Formal Religious Instruction

Catholic education is cited as being taught to Port Glasgow's Irish Catholic children as early as 1834 (Handley 1964:126) and records say the first Roman Catholic school was erected in 1861 and superseded by a new and larger school in 1883. However, Catholic schools were not firmly established within the state system in Scotland until the passing of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1918. As a consequence of the 1918 Act and the resources it made available for denominational education, Catholic children were brought into closer contact with their religion.

Through the daily school curriculum pupils acted out many of the duties their religion placed upon them and gained instruction in the methods and teachings of the church and the execution of Catholic religious practice. Attendance at religious

events like the "First Friday" observance - Catholics believe a special indulgence is granted to individuals who attend mass on the first Friday of the month[6] - were part of the school curriculum and pupils were marched from the school to the church at 11 am on these days to hear mass. Similarly, children were taken from school to hear mass on special feast days and, although free from school on "holy days of obligation" when it was compulsory for Catholics to go to mass, they were given strict instructions in the days leading up to the feast day about their duty to God and the church.

School-based preparation also played an important part in the lead-up to the important sacraments such as getting ready to celebrate making one's First Holy Communion, First Confession and Confirmation. Children learned to mark in a pious way special times in the church's calendar like the month of May, which is dedicated to the memory of "Our Lady", the mother of Christ, and when special prayers and hymns are said and sung to Her memory in church and at home. The "Sacred Heart of Jesus" is celebrated in the month of June and "The Holy Souls" are remembered during the month of November. These and other notable Catholic events were celebrated as part of the children's education through the school system in place since the mid nineteenth century and more formally established in 1918 in Scotland. Nowhere in Scotland was Catholic religious instruction more vigorously prosecuted than in the industrial heartland of the country where the large Irish Catholic communities flourished. This constituted a full workload of duties and observances for young Catholics from which there could be little or no deviation.

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[6] "Indulgences" are granted to those who performed good deeds under the laws of the church, which earn them credit with God. This credit is redeemable after death when one's soul ascends to Heaven.

5.7.2 Informal Religious Education

On top of the formal teaching received in school, most children of this era would experience religious observance in the family home and through the influence of the priest in the community. This latter aspect cannot be emphasised enough because the priest had the power to force youngsters away from their street games and their territorial defence strategies of hanging around street corners and propel them directly to the very altar rails.

> Min' we used tae stan' at the fit o' Back Row Lane an' big Father McIntyre. If ye seen him comin' ye got aff yer mark. If ye stood there he took ye right intae chapel, intae devotions. (Paddy Collins SA1998:18)

Paddy Collins, like many other young Catholics in the Port in the 1930's, spent a great deal of time dodging the parish priest. As far as Paddy and his mates were concerned, this almost daily routine was the natural consequence of hanging around the streets of the town. There was an understanding among those involved that this was the norm. Those caught allowed themselves to be driven into church. Father McIntyre, whose incumbency lasted from 1933-1940, expected the nightly chase to result in at least a few "prisoners" for the church. There was an obvious common understanding that the power of the priest in this community was paramount. His apparent right to apprehend youths from the street and march them into devotions was testimony to the place he held in this society.

His actions met not just with the co-operation - however unwilling - of those captured, but, more importantly, with the approval of the parents and adult population in general. Co-operation was guaranteed as the priest's licence was unquestioned. For those who managed to escape Father McIntyre's assault on their freedom to roam the town there was a great feeling of having thwarted the church's

control, but for Port youngsters in general there was no real escape from the authority of Father McIntyre or the church. One instance does not perhaps prove the point; however, if we consider that Paddy Collins was already twenty-one years of age, coming towards the end of his apprenticeship and contemplating his impending wedding when Father McIntyre's incumbency started, we get a clearer picture of the power this priest was exercising.

Significantly, the same actions were continued in the 1940s, as one interviewee recalls.

J.W.: Ah min' wan night there were sailors down there [Murray Shore recreation hall] during the war [WW II], and these sailors were havin' a carry-on wi' us, an' we were runnin' through the gatehouse place an' we didn't know that wan o' the priests wis in there ... an' of course he caught me an' Margaret an' he made us say the whole rosary.

H.H.: Just where you were standin'?

J.W.: Aye (laughter). An' of course, that kept us late for goin' home, we'd tae be in for 10 o' clock, no later. An' me and Margaret are walkin' up the road no' botherin', next thing Ah see ma father at the top o' Princes Street an' Ah says `Oh gosh'. An' he had this big belt with him, know. An'... Ah run an' run doon tae the close at John Wood Street where we lived then an' oh, he belted intae me. That wis the first time ever ma father hit me. But it wis jist they were frightened ... ye never knew the minute there wis gonnie be an' air raid an' there we were, runnin' round the streets. (Josie Watson SA1998:14)

No amount of explaining that the priest had held them up would have saved Josie from the belting her father felt she deserved because, if he had known that the priest had reprimanded them for hanging around the Murray Shore hall where men - especially servicemen - went for entertainment, the belting might have been even more severe!

In the 1950s priests were still commanding a high level of respect among their flock. However, considering the way this respect is often manifest in the memories of

those who experienced the perambulations of the priests in the Port, one cannot help but detect the element of fear in their recollection of the situation.

D.R.: Eh John, dae you no' remember Canon McGauron (1951-1958) ... wis he no' a very dominant man? ... 'cause Ah remember when Ah wis a wee boy, Ah wis only aboot six [1952] he used tae come up [the street] an' everybody wis divin' oot back windaes an' everywhere tae jouk [escape] him, 'there the parish priest comin', y'know, an' they'd all be off. (Davie Rorrison SA1990:113)

J.C.: See Canon McGauron, he had a very bad speech. He met wi', he got a wound during the First World War an' that wis him. But there wis another man there that wis worse than any o' them, Father Heron, Patrick Heron (1929-1930). Paddy Heron used tae come up an' he used tae say, lift us aff the street an' say 'come on along wi' me', go up an' knock a door. 'Ah'm just in tae see ye Molly an' Ah brought ma disciples wi' me, gie them a chit 'n jam' [laughter], that's no joke, aye 'gie them a piece 'n jam'. (John Connaghan SA1990:113)

It would appear from these reminiscences that the parish priest in the Port is remembered with a mixture of respect and apprehension. From Paddy Collins's experiences in the 1930s to Davie Rorrison's recollection of fear-ridden family members escaping out of rear windows in the 1950s, the parish priest's visits could cause concern as well as comfort in the hearts of those he chose to call on.

However, the significance of this situation should not be lost in the inherently amusing and at times aureate detail of these recollections. Neither was the very real power of the priest restricted to the effect it had on the young Catholics of the community. This power must also be seen in the context of the adult world. Why were parents so acquiescent to the authority of the priest and the way he controlled the movements of their children outside the home and school, scooping them from their play in the street to attend mass? Was it because they themselves had a fear of the power of the parish priest who could affect their daily lives in the community? Or were they simply relieved that in such desperate circumstances, with cramped housing and large families to contend with someone other than mothers showed

concern over the development of the town's Catholic youth? These elements no doubt played their part, but a much deeper seated reason, buried within the psyche and the cultural heritage of the Port's Irish Catholic population, influenced their attitude and disposition towards Roman Catholic clergymen.

5.7.3 Speaking the Language: a Blessed Mystery

Roman Catholics believe that the clergy from His Holiness the Pope down to the parish priest and his curate assistant have been chosen by God to perform His work on earth. The priesthood is not a profession; rather, Catholics believe that priests are called by God to serve Him in the temporal world. Naturally, such a demanding spiritual calling sets them apart from the rest of the population. This kind of distinction is reinforced by the priest's vows that require him to remain celibate and married to the church only. The mysteriousness surrounding the priest befits the very essence of the cornerstone of the Catholic faith, the mass. In the celebration of the Catholic mass and in particular in the Eucharist the eternal nature of Christ's sacrifice for God's people here on earth is re-enacted. To this day Catholics will refer to the "blessed mysteries" of the mass. In the years before the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) the mass was said in Latin, which brought its own mysteriousness to the proceedings.

The Irish Catholic immigrants to early nineteenth century Port Glasgow would perhaps have been in awe at the very ceremonial grandeur of what they were witnessing however infrequent and cramped it might have been in Jock Ha's Close. Their descendants benefited from being educated in the sacrament of the mass at

school and could follow the priest's actions. The fact that the mass was held in Latin did not deter them; indeed, it made the mass even more special.

> Ah suppose it wis just different ... maybe it gave the priest a wee bit o' charisma because he could say all this in Latin ... it gave ye that wee bit o' the mystique aboot the thing, although ye didn't know every word that was said ye could respond tae it ... quite a few of the hymns were in Latin an ye got tae know them ... Ah mean when ye were kneeling there listening tae the priest ye actually believed the priest wis changin' that bread and wine intae the body and blood of Jesus Christ. It had more mystique if it was in Latin. Ah mean, he wis speakin' a language that you didn't know and it made it [the consecration miracle] that wee bit more realistic for you, that you were sayin', 'Oh well, this must be happening'. An' it has lost a wee bit that its all in English noo. (Hugo Hagan SA1998:17)

Attendance at mass superseded any notion or desire to understand exactly what was being said and done by the priest. The fact that one was there, taking part in the blessed mystery being performed on the altar, was all-important. It was not important to the congregation that they understood what was being said. They believed what was happening was holy and God was present in the ritual. They believed also that they were benefiting from being in the presence of this holy act and in the sight of God, present on the holy altar in the form of the host [holy wafer]. The right thing to do in the presence of God was to pray and this is what those attending mass did throughout the ceremony.

> That wis the thing tae dae when ye went there [church]. Ye knelt doon an' ye said yer own prayers ... people knelt doon wi' their rosary beads, said the rosary. See when it came [the English mass] they said [priests] we don't waant this rosary through the mass because things are getting said through the mass we waant ye tae hear ... people would say the prayers that they wanted for that special day [private intentions] ... they'd be prayin' for their family, prayin' for the dead, prayin' for the sick, for young people passin' exams ... they'd pray for their neighbours ... that wis the kind o' thing they done while the mass wis goin' on. (Paddy Collins, Cathie Hagan & Hugo Hagan SA1998:17)

Catholics believe that being present and close to this celebration on the altar confers special blessings upon them, for which a literal understanding of what is

being said is not necessary. With regard to the Eucharist, transubstantiation is fundamental to the Catholic belief. The congregation believe that in the "blessed mysteries" of the consecration, bread and wine is actually turned into the body and blood of Christ at the hands of the priest. It is not difficult to understand why the priest in this situation was held in such enormous esteem by his flock. If the congregation were taking part in a "blessed mystery" through their attendance and responses during the mass then the celebrant, called by God to perform this sacrament in a sacred language, was accepted as having supernatural powers.

We can assume that the young Catholics of inter-war Port Glasgow who were subject to the teaching and influence of the church through their school system, not to mention the extra-curricular devotion often forced upon them by the priest, accordingly accepted the fundamental tenets of their religion.

5.7.4 Popular Belief

Whilst the children were learning about the Catholic Church and its sacraments and laws in school, many of their parents cherished a Catholicism which had come to them from a very different source: traditional practice. Their Catholicism was, to quote a popular hymn of that era, the "Faith of Our Fathers". This is not to say that they were unquestioning in their adherence to this faith. In fact, Margaret O'Donoghue, who remained committed to her faith throughout her life, experienced moments of uncertainty and put her questioning mind down to the influence of her non-Catholic mother.

> Nae harm tae her [mother] she wisn't any the worse o' it ... she wisn't a Catholic. An' she had nothin' whatsoever against Catholicity, she couldn't take it in. See anybody that's a Protestant, it [Catholicism] takes a quair bit o' believin'. Ye see it's really all on belief, it's on, on belief. In fact, sometimes,

> God forgive me for sayin' it, but sometimes ye feel, my God, is it true or is it all mumbo-jumbo ... right enough, dae ye no' think the Catholic Church is a lot tae live up tae. (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1997:16)

In exactly the same way as their Irish folk culture was preserved, their faith was based on what was handed down from generation to generation. Schooling was not a prominent issue in the daily life of the Irish poor arriving in Scotland's industrial towns from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, and certainly many of those arriving from the more remote areas of Ireland were not formally educated. Among those who found their way to Port Glasgow in the 1930s were those that were without the basics in literacy.

> Some o' the neighbours were Irish, some o' them were that Irish they couldn't even read or write ... Mrs Gillan next door in King Street, she couldn't read nor write, ma mother had tae dae all the readin' for her ... letters she got from her relatives in Ireland, ma mother had tae read them all for her. Some o' the Irish weren't educated y'know, but eh, where ma mother came from they aw went tae school - coorse, they came under Britain, wouldn't they, in the North of Ireland. (Josie Watson SA1997:27)

So, whatever knowledge Mrs Gillan had of her religion was not of a learned nature; it came from her parents and their parents before them. This does not mean she was any less devout for that. Folk belief has an ability to survive periods of great change and the assimilation of cultures. Indeed, many of the religious festivals celebrated with great reverence and piety today across Europe are Christian forms of pagan rituals and folk customs much older than Christianity. Christianity, and particularly Roman Catholicism has, in a practical respect, its foundations firmly embedded in the folk culture of the first millennium. In her study of Austrian religious recollections and the difference in prayers between learned doctrine and living practice, Olivia Wiebel-Fanderl (1994:102) concludes: "Everyday religion at any given time is always dependent on the learned doctrine and visual images ... there is

always a gap between learned doctrine and everyday practice of religion. There are always different dimensions. Prayer can be dialogue with God, worship, praise and request, but also magic to manage the burden of everyday life."

There is nothing unusual in this; it is a situation which was and is replicated in many European Catholic communities, where organised religious structures emanating from the political and religious centres experience difficulties in penetrating the less densely populated cultural regions. Wiebel-Fanderl (1994:102) captures the essence of this situation when she claims that, "religious everyday practice [in outlying areas] is never the opposite of clerical religion, but mixed up with popular religion."

Irish Catholic immigrants depended more on their belief in the traditional method of propitiating God from the home than by making regular visits to a church. Scholars have remarked how this situation affected their ability to assimilate into the church-based religious society that was industrial Scotland[7]. Given that many of those who arrived in Scotland emigrated from rural Irish communities, it is safe to assume that church-going was not always a possibility for them, never mind a priority.

This is not to suggest that they all followed the same traditional religious code; they came from different areas of Ireland and carried the beliefs and cultural "trademarks" of the places in which they grew-up. Josie Watson draws the distinction between her mother who was literate and came from Northern Ireland and her neighbour who came from the Republic of Ireland and was unable to read. Differences were there to be seen and heard, but the similarities in their circumstances were even more visible in the poor conditions under which they were

[7]Cf. Aspinwall (1982).

forced to live. Any religious cultural differences they harboured may in fact have enhanced the chances of the parish priest to create a sense of community among them. Diversity of religious practice or belief there may have been but it was not traditionally centred on a communal place of worship. Their 'church' existed within themselves; their devotion to private prayer even whilst attending mass demonstrates their commitment to the power of private prayer and personal devotion.

> Most people during the mass had a prayer book or they had rosaries ... people would say the rosary all during the mass ... tae whatever saint they prayed tae. (Paddy Collins, Cathie Hagan & Hugo Hagan SA1998:17)

It could be argued that those attending mass had no option but to say their own prayers as the service could not be understood, but that would be to misunderstand the significance of the Mass to Roman Catholics, especially those who witnessed the Latin Mass.

> But then the Latin mass, the priest had his back tae the congregation, ye didnae see whit was goin' on ... ye heard him. He said everythin' in Latin ... he spoke oot in Latin right enough, but there wis only certain things that ye understood ... ye knew when the mass wis goin' on whit the mass was about but ye didn't understand this Latin. People ... Ah liked the Latin mass ... it wis different wisn't it. This wis somethin' that the mass wis in Latin. Ye didn't know any Latin but ye could follow the mass. (Paddy Collins, Cathie Hagan & Hugo Hagan SA1998:17)

The priest was performing a miracle in front of the congregation and their presence meant they stood to benefit from the grace that flowed from the act. As Paddy Collins said:

> That ye were there when the mass was said that wis the important thing, that ye were there at mass. (Paddy Collins SA1998:17)

Attending Mass did not interfere with the preference many Catholics had for private prayer and homely devotion; in fact it accommodated this throwback to the days of Irish immigration and the traditional beliefs and practices of those who

settled in Port Glasgow. This allowed for the building of a Catholic community around the church whilst preserving the traditional customs and beliefs the individual Irish families may have valued.

Chapter Six

RELIGIOUS PRACTICE AND BELIEF

6.1 A World View

In attempting to maintain the support of the Catholic families in the Port town centre the priest would make use of the visiting missionaries to the parish. These missions were church based and their message was in line with church policy, but they added another dimension to the work of building a community around the Catholic faith. The missionary brothers brought new and exciting ideas to the parish. A cosmopolitan view came to the Port and gave parishioners a window to the world.

Catholics in early twentieth century Scotland had not developed a "world view" of their religion, which their counterparts in Ireland enjoyed[1]. The minority status of the Catholic Church in Scotland and the migratory nature of the early immigrants meant that the bishops were not in a comparable position of power to their Irish colleagues and that their congregation was less anchored to any given place. Also, the difficulties of sustaining life and coping with the abiding poverty in which they existed blurred the view to the world of the immigrant population and the clergy. When a community is isolated then their "world" becomes that which they experience within their own spatial and political boundaries. This was the experience of Port Glasgow's Irish Catholic's. Although they were not completely isolated[2] in 1930's Port Glasgow the Irish Catholics were largely bound together in the town centre's slum dwellings. They were bound by

[1] Cf. Lysaght (1994).

[2] Many Irish immigrants moved around the country looking for work and there was a steady influx of new arrivals from Ireland.

cultural links, religious empathy, a common experience of the fate they were enduring, and they shared an appreciation of their remoteness from their native land. We should not minimise the effect these shared feelings had among second and third generation Irish in Port Glasgow. "The term Irish applied in many instances to people of Irish extraction as well as birth, certainly down to 1914. Second or third generation Irish who were counted as English or Scottish in the census returns, often retained the attitudes and traditions of their Irish parents and grandparents." (Gallagher 1985:109)

Port Glasgow's Catholic community was formed upon common experiences and fears which were given shape by the church and more precisely the parish priest. As we have seen above, Father Heron, whose incumbency lasted only from 1929 to 1930, had a lasting impression on his congregation because of his confrontational approach towards the Protestant residents of Bouverie Street and the Glen. Other priests encouraged the congregation by advocating that they become more closely attached to their religion and more intrinsically part of the Catholic community. The parish missions were seen as a very effective way of pursuing this objective.

6.2 Soldiers for Christ

The parish mission movement is held in Ireland to have been the vital player in the general religious revival experienced there in the years and generations following the famine of 1845. Some observers go as far as to say that the missions were the single most important factor in making and consolidating the devotional revolution which took place in Ireland post 1850, and which continued working well into the twentieth century.

> Catholic religious practice was becoming more institutionalised and centred mainly on the parish church ... Many new and reinvigorated aids to nourish a more personal spirituality, such as medals, scapulars and rosary beads became more common, largely through the parish missions. Other devotions were centred, or at least partly so, on the church, under clerical control. These included benediction, the "forty hours" adoration of the blessed sacrament, the devotion of the "nine Fridays" in honour of the Sacred Heart ... and also promoted devotion to the "holy hour", the stations of the cross and a variety of sodalities and confraternities such as the sodalities of the scapulars, of the Sacred Heart, of the Living Rosary, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the confraternity of Christian Doctrine and the Blessed Sacrament, all of which promoted devotion to the Eucharist and benediction, combining private devotion and church centred observances. (Lysaght 1994:192-193)

Lysaght's claim that the church relied on the mission movement in Ireland to make the church more accessible to the people can also be applied to Scotland. "Church centred observances" are not too difficult to imagine; they include mass, devotions, benediction, saint's days' observances etc., and their regularity and form were determined by the church. The important element of "private devotion" was less well disposed to priestly supervision. Yet, it played a vital part in the church's drive to make the immigrant Catholic population a more church-orientated people and it had its foundation in the traditional beliefs of the Irish. The church sought to build a foundation in Port Glasgow on a combination of the traditional beliefs of the Irish immigrants and the doctrine and sacraments of the Catholic church proper. Methods were tailored to suit the situation; it could be said that the Port's Irish Catholics were given the ritualistic tools to enable them to better view their particular religious world. A special sort of world view was fostered through the promotion of respect for the priest, advocating him as the foundation stone of Catholic community development. Missionaries to the developing Catholic congregations had a particular influence, not least because their mysterious,

crusading persona, and their impersonal approach gave them a special air of authority.

6.2.1 The Missionary Influence

The mission movement was spearheaded by male religious orders. Their influence and power stemmed as much from their mysterious and exotic nature as with from spiritual teaching and their interest in the spiritual and temporal welfare of the communities they visited. Missionaries brought with them the news and the experiences of others in a similar plight elsewhere. Some came directly from their crusade in foreign climes whilst others came from Lanarkshire, Banffshire or from other areas and towns in Renfrewshire. They all brought with them information about struggling Catholic communities in these places. It is no revelation that isolated groups take great succour from the knowledge of others fighting the same battle. There is an affinity of kindred spirits, which serves to drive the force of their own belief forward. Missionaries are often portrayed as frontline troops serving God and the church in dangerous and hostile places and their presence in Port Glasgow served to confirm the Catholic community in their struggle and increase their determination to succeed. The obvious parallel for the priests and missionary brothers as well as for the ordinary Irish Catholic in the Port was the situation in Ireland. The powerful image of the downtrodden Irish being forced into exile was regularly employed by the clergy and influential members of the congregation as a strategy for survival and developing loyalty in those places where they settled. The descendants of the Port's pioneering Catholics, served by the missionary movement, routinely recalled their struggle in militaristic terms. James M. Toner of St John's

Literary and Debating Society wrote about the history of the Catholic struggle in Scotland as essentially an Irish question.

> The agitation which finally brought a measure of constitutional freedom to the Catholics of these islands in 1829 came neither from the polite and humiliating negotiations of the English Catholic Committee, nor from the resistance of the faithful remnant here in Scotland, but from the children of a fighting race ... They never admitted the right of conquest and in the struggle for religious and political freedom the church and the people were as one ... In 1829 the hand which scribbled the Royal Assent to Catholic Emancipation dashed the pen to the floor in impotent rage ... A century has passed. The dignity of the Catholic life has borne good fruit. Our forefathers 'chained in prisons dark' were ready and willing to die for the faith. Their emancipated children's love was the love of their faith; their noblest pride the spreading of the faith. We are not asked to die for the faith; we are asked to live for the faith ... Let us be loyal and let us cherish the faith above all things and beyond all things and be worthy of our ancestors who endured so much, who fought the good fight. (anon. 1929:5)

To James Toner and others in St. John's, Catholicism was synonymous with being Irish. When he talks of the struggle for the faith he refers also to the struggle of the Irish to establish themselves in Port Glasgow. The struggle facing politically astute and devout Irish Catholic immigrants, particularly, the clergy, eager to put down roots in Port Glasgow, was not simply one of having their religion recognised rather it meant to be on guard against offers of conditional acceptance.

6.2.2 Proselytising

The Port's Catholic community needed to be given maximum protection to develop properly in the eyes of the church. Past experience of anti-Catholicism such as that which saw the mass outlawed in Ireland and which brought French priests to Port Glasgow and Greenock in the early 1800s made them aware of how important the proper and gradual

process of growth of Catholicism in Presbyterian Scotland was. Church authorities were also aware how vulnerable these Catholic communities in their poverty and insecurity were to proselytising and evangelical bodies within and without the Catholic church. The heroic endeavours of previous generations struggling against the proscription of Roman Catholicism served to sustain loyalty among many Catholics to the church's teaching.

The Catholic hierarchy also went on the offensive against those who they believed sought to entice their flock into another religion. For example, Archbishop Eyre established a vanguard within the church against the evangelical threat to Catholicism in Scotland; in 1882 he presided over a public meeting at which the guest speaker, Dr Munro, lectured on 'The Proselytizing of Roman Catholic Children'. As the Roman Catholic delegate to orphanage and school board meetings, Munro spoke of the Governors' constant accusations that the Catholic clergy blocked their attempt to recruit more children into these institutions. Agreeing that many Catholic children failed to attend these institutions, Munro stated that it was mostly because of poverty which, he claimed, the Protestant Church saw fit to exploit rather than to destroy. He went on to assert that the Protestant motto was "You can share in all our charities, but the condition is you must accept the religion of the giver". Whether for exploitative or compassionate reasons, the method adopted by many Presbyterian churches was failsafe. Free "Sunday breakfast" at the John Morrison Street United Evangelical hall attracted 2000 souls every week, of whom Munro estimated 325 were Catholic. Archbishop Eyre remarked that they should "let them keep their charity" (Hagan 1987:14-15). Proselytising was, of course, not the threat it had been by the 1930's but contemporary secular, indeed atheist, movements were

thought to be equally as liable to cause Catholics to lapse from the faith if left unchallenged[3]. Trade unionism and industrial and political bodies espousing socialist ideal were developing apace at this time and were considered a threat by church leaders. The Roman Catholic Church saw organisations like the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart as an ideal way of combating the threat of secular society.

6.3 The Battle against Social Iniquity and Political Dogma

> Many false prophets shall rise, and shall seduce many. And because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of many shall grow cold. (Matthew 24, 11-12)

As Port Glasgow's shipbuilding industry expanded and its managers and owners prospered, the living standards of those who built the ships remained poor. We have already witnessed the conditions of life for some families in the Port in the 1930s. The church feared the moral corruption that these conditions created: the alcohol abuse and neglect of family values, which sapped their moral strength.

> Wumman were always dominant then, but many wumman got kill't [battered]. Men battered an' abused them. Ah lot o' wumman drank in them days n'there wis no money for drink. An' they used tae fight among themselves tae, manies a fight ah saw wi' the wumman in George Street...through drink. (Cassie Graham SA1998:09)

6.3.1 The Threat of Radical Solutions

The church was concerned about movements and organisations that would encourage Catholics to question their faith and seduce them into revoking their belief. The sort of outright proselytising which went on in the nineteenth century, where breakfasts and

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[3] Interestingly, the post Vatican II Church Missal still carried a warning to Catholics on the dangers of Jansenism. (anon. 1966:286)

lunches were offered in return for service attendance, had largely disappeared by the inter-war years. But, the Clydeside shipyards were becoming increasingly political places in the early twentieth century, when boom and slump economic trends brought at times an abundance of work followed by long spells of inactivity and unemployment. More worrying for the church was the fact that women were often to be found at the forefront of these Clydeside struggles in their defiance of corrupt landlords and local property developers[4].

Politicians and church leaders alike feared that the hand of radical socialism and communism was behind outbreaks of unruly behaviour. Indeed, at the level of local political activity in Port Glasgow power struggles between the new socialist idealists and the entrenched employer classes were at work, and the Irish Catholic poor were attracted to some of the radical messages.

> An' there used tae be a Communist came roon' the corners [streets] n'talk. An; ma mother, sittin' over the balcony watchin' him talkin', an' she says, 'They're good, they tell ye no' tae pay any rent', she says, 'They're good'. So, they didn't pay any rent, so they all got intae a fankle then, they were gonnie all lose their house. Says I, 'you're as daft as the rest o' them', Ah says, 'For God's sake'. She says, 'Ah didn't know where Ah wis pittin' ma vote'. We got her a' straightened oot anyway. But, she voted Labour eftir that. There wis a big crowd for this Geddes [Communist candidate] ... that wis them that telt ye tae no' tae pay the rent, coorse, they were all for him. Would you no' be if they told ye no' tae pay the rent. (Liz McKenna SA1997:30)

Liz's mother was one of the many uneducated Irish immigrants whose families were scattered between Port Glasgow and Greenock, depending on the work situation. Her illiteracy and lack of political awareness made her a target for political activists of all persuasions, but she was particularly attracted to the advice of the local communists in the

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[4] Cf. also Melling (1983).

1930s. She, like many poor people, knew what immediate changes would make life more bearable. She liked what the local communist candidates were advocating, and her son, being a communist, persuaded her to back them at the ballot box. But the struggle for her vote was bitterly contested by her daughter Liz, who was a Labour Party activist.

L.M.: It wis the day before the votin' an' ma three brothers were sittin' wi' ma mother an' Tommy says, 'Ah'm takin' ma mother tae vote the morra', says I, 'Naw yer no', if it's the last thing Ah do', says I, 'Ah'll be doon first thing in the mornin', the schools only across the street an' Ah'll see she votes Labour'. Naw ye'll no', [says Tommy].' An' there wis a battle that day. Ma two brothers had tae come an' catch me Ah wis gonnie choke him, Ah wis gonnie kill'm, Ah wis ragin'. He [Tommy] says, 'Look Liz it's like this ...' Ah says, 'It disnae matter, she's not gonnie vote Communist, poor soul disnae know whit she's votin'. He jist pit her name doon as a Communist.

H.H.: Did you take your mother eventually?

L.M.: Oh yes. Ah took her doon in the mornin'. Ah waited till he went tae his work in the mornin', he worked in Bishopton [Royal Ordnance Factory] during the day, worked in the pub at night. So, waited until he went oot. When he came home at night, he says, 'Ye ready mother, Ah'm takin' ye across tae the votin'. She says, 'Liz had me doon already, took me doon tae the votin'. He wis ragin'.
(Liz McKenna SA1997:30)

Liz was equally as committed to her Catholicism and considered communist politics irreconcilably opposed to membership of the Catholic church. Her memory of what the parish priest considered correct on this issue is clear.

L.M.: Priests were dead against the Communists.

H.H.: Did they preach against the Communists?

L.M.: Aye. An' the Communists had no praise for the Catholics at all.
(Liz McKenna SA1997:30)

Of course, one could argue that if like Liz the congregation were true to the teaching of the church, then the priest must have been fairly confident that his idea of what was politically right would have been reflected in the thoughts of the faithful. The stereotypical

image of the obedient congregation faithfully and unquestionably following the teaching of the church, and more precisely the parish priest, is common. However, Catholic mothers and wives in 1930s Port Glasgow were too close to the poverty line to be committed to all aspects of the church's teaching. This was especially true in temporal matters where a needs must attitude had to prevail, and the church was at times thought to be aloof in its attitude to the survival skills cultivated by this situation.

> No' the Catholic Church. Enough said! Ah min' the National Strike, that wis in 1926, whit age would Ah been then, Ah'd a been aboot fourteen or fifeteen at that time. Ah wis born in 1911. Well, the Protestant churches opened up the halls in the town an' give oot soup an' bread ... there wis no money. We didn't get anythin' ... black starvation if they [Protestant churches] hadn't a fed them, terrible. Ah min' it ... the weans goin' down, ye got a ticket, go down wi' a jug an' get yer ful' o' soup an' maybe half a loaf. ... Catholic Church never did that ... they never had a [soup] movement nor nothin' up tae late years ... money grabbers.
> (Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

Liz McKenna was also anything but the compliant parishioner. She was a vigorous supporter of local socialist politics and capable of forming strong views on matters of principle. She regarded it as perfectly natural that the parish priest preached on the dangers of communism. Nevertheless, the idea that priests should openly preach politics from the altar, even in the less politically correct 1930s, might have seemed unsavoury to outsiders; that they often openly rallied against dangerous political creeds such as communism may not have rankled so much or appeared so outrageous.

Whatever 'right' was, it was not voting for the communist party. The parish priest would not, however, assume that continuously high church attendance guaranteed a congregation confirmed in their opposition to communism. He knew that many of the congregation were not politically astute and that many of them were living in abject poverty.

Consequently, they were open to persuasion on political acts such as non-payment of rent. Violent protests such as that experienced by Cassie Graham when she joined a march to the Provost's door in Port Glasgow in 1931 were also a concern for the precariously positioned Catholic Church in Protestant Scotland. Local prominent Protestant leaders were not slow in apportioning blame for such acts of political agitation at the door of the immigrant population.

> The latest riot occurred on Friday, 8th October 1931, when a deputation of the unemployed requested that the Public Assistance Committee would confer with them on the Means Test. This being refused a procession was formed which marched through the town, and while passing the Clydesdale Bank broke a window. They then proceeded to Lilybank, halting outside the Provost's house, the band playing 'The Red Flag'. They refused to move, and the police then drew their batons and dispersed them. The unfortunate reputation of this and other burghs on the Clyde only results from the evil behaviour of a few; the mass of the people are law abiding, honest and industrious, and deplore these incidents. The basic trouble is the free admission to the country of aliens of every description. In 1921 there were in Scotland 451,786 persons of non-Scottish birth. The Westminster Parliament does nothing to relieve this state of affairs, which grows worse yearly. The National Party of Scotland stands for Scottish regulation of immigration and the preservation of Scottish characteristics. No other political party does. (MacArthur 1932:196-197)

By encouraging regular church attendance, the priest aimed to protect his flock from the evils of society such as radical politics and other such social profanities. The church taught that failure to attend mass was a sin punishable by staining the soul. Stains, of course, had to be removed if one was to be in a fit state to receive Christ through Holy Communion, and stains could only be removed through the act of confession and penance. This was a strong deterrent against missing mass, but it was not considered strong enough amidst industrial hardship, domestic squalor and inter-religious tensions with the attendant morally bankrupt attractions like alcohol abuse and loose sexual mores, to prevent

Catholics from being enticed away from the church.

6.3.2 Respectability Compromised: the Threat of Illegitimacy

It was the latter of these two morally corrupt acts that alarmed the church most and it saw the terrible social conditions that its flock were being forced to endure as the biggest contributor to the erosion of moral values. Living conditions were inadequate for the family forced to inhabit the one-room dwellings that were common in the town's Bay Area. If these confined spaces were being used as a means of making extra income, as many were from time to time, then things became intolerably unhealthy and morally unsustainable.

> C.G: Ah min' efter the First World War when all the Irishmen came over [to Port Glasgow] ma maw had six lodgers in a room an' kitchen ... Ah don't know where they all slept, all young fellas. They didn't enter the War ye see. Used tae be great fun a' these young Irish fellas ... left half the lassies in the toon hivin' weans tae them ... pigs. They [pregnant young women] were flung oot an' had tae go intae lodgin's most o' them lassies ... an' depend on somebody tae watch the wean, they had an awful job ... noo they're [illegitimate children] handed-up big parties when they get christened . Changed days ... Naw! Lot o' bother getting' it christened. (Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

Emi Donnelly tells us from her own experience of this situation:

> There wis a bit o'[trouble], but eventually Ah got the wean christened. Father O'Sullivan and me got on well an' he knew the circumstances and that ... he wis very nice aboot it, very nice he wis wi' me ... it wis according tae the priest [whether the child got baptised] some people had tae go elsewhere, Ah mean the wean cannie help it, it's a sin [not to baptise the child]. Well, they've [priest's] got tae answer tae God for that [refusing a baptism], because Our Lord widnae dae that, bloody terrible that. (Emi Donnelly SA2001:012)

A priest being presented with a request to have an illegitimate baby baptised into the faith had to search his own conscience before giving his decision. On the other hand, Irish Catholic families who believed implicitly in the after life, and the need to have certain

religious credentials in place in order for that to be possible, were made to sweat over the spiritual future of a baby born out of wedlock because of the threat hanging over their ability to get the child baptised a Catholic.

It was almost inevitable that young women sharing a small living space with a number of young male lodgers were likely to become the focus of their sexual intent, encouraged or not. We could also say, that unplanned pregnancies were not uncommon under the circumstances. Cassie certainly describes it so. We have already heard about the 'Venus of the ashpit' and how this could be a route to marriage[5]. But this sort of plan, if it can be properly described as such, was not at all foolproof. Many men denied their complicity and many men's families, in an effort to defend their own respectability, denied it for them. More than that, it was not unknown for young men to be packed off to a distant place to escape the consequences of their actions. A young woman trapped in such circumstances was often left to deal with the consequences alone without the help of her family, never mind the sympathy or understanding of the father's. The family wrangles were fought out over the responsibility and respectability or otherwise of their respective offspring, which could be a harrowing experience. However, in the eyes of the church the child was also somehow complicit and therefore required to pay for being born under unholy circumstances by remaining outside the church's care. As Cassie indicated, there was often some difficulty in getting the child baptised. It was not unusual for the parish priest to refuse to baptise a child born out of wedlock, just as it was not unusual for a young pregnant woman to be abandoned or mistreated by friends and family for

[5] Cf. chapter 4.5.3 above.

compromising the family's respectability.

> Aye, ye were a baddy Hughie, because Ah know ... Ah went through it an' ye were a bad lassie. That's true, ye were shunned, naebody wanted tae know ye ... talked aboot ye ... couldn't say anything good aboot ye, there wis no goodness aboot ye it wis all badness ... Ah wis only 15 or 16 an' Ah had tae go tae work an' naebody tae look eftir the wean ... Ah wis between that [work] an' handouts to make ends meet ... they [family] didn't want tae know ... ye were a bad, bad woman or lassie. In fact, Ah wis told that tae ma face by the fellas mother, she says " You're a bad, bad wee lassie" [Irish accent] She wis an Irish wuman an' God forgive me for sayin' this, but she wis an oul' whore. "My boy's a good boy an' you're a bad wee lassie". Ah'll always remember her saying that right intae ma face. Coorse, Ah went an' married somebody else eventually. He [the child's father] wis sent away tae sea an' by the time he came back Ah wis merried ontae somebody else an he came lookin' fur me ... se whit Ah mean, an' me havin' already got married tae somebody ... whatever ... probably Ah wid have married him then an' Ah think his family had come roon by that time. (Emi Donnelly SA2001:012)

This experience exposes the terrible social trials which some women had to endure, and the rejection they might expect to suffer at the hands of friends, family and the church if, having become pregnant, they failed to secure marriage. Emi was judged to have brought shame on the family household by becoming pregnant and this was compounded by the family of the father refusing to allow a marriage to take place between them. Emi's mother contained her feelings of anger and hurt over her daughter's indiscretion until the doctor confirmed the pregnancy. When she realised there was no mistake and no way out, her anger boiled over and Emi felt her wrath.

> Ah knew what Ah had done, but Ah didn't know anything at all aboot it, if ye know whit Ah mean, he wis 19 an' Ah wis 15. Anyway, Ah didn't know Ah wis gonnie hiv a wean ... didn't know anything at all aboot havin'weans ... She[mother] took me up tae Doctor O'Kane's because she noticed ma period had stopped. Ah wis only 11 when Ah took ma period 'cause a remember tellin' ma maw when Ah wis at school an' she said, 'Och, ye'll be alright, there's nothin' wrong wi' ye.' Ah thought Ah wis gonnie bleed tae death ... so anyway, he says 'aye', Ah wis pregnant. Well, she took me doon home an' this is as true as God ... Ah got kicked from wan end o' that hoose tae the other and back. Ah don't know how Ah ever had a wean ... called me for all the dirty dogs, och what Ah didnae get called ... oul Tilda Kelly from

> doon the stairs came up, she says 'In the name o' God, you're gonnie kill her. She's no' the first an' she'll no' be the last, leave her alone for God's sake' ... Don't know how Ah ever had that wean, murder ... an' ma mother wis a big, strong wuman. (Emi Donnelly SA2001:012)

The consequences of this sort of situation were clear as far as the church was concerned. It served to undermine the morals of the parishioners and the church and the priest preached against it at every opportunity. The church's quest to keep the flock safe from the social iniquities which obviously proved attractive to some relied heavily on filling women's lives with as much church-based time as possible. The confraternities proved to be a valuable tool in making this possible.

6.4 Guarding against Heresy: Confraternities and the Home

> We on'y had the Sacred Heart at that time ... it wis like a meetin' ... Sacred Heart it wis in the Chapel ... an' the priest preached. It wis like goin' tae mass as they say, an' him gien a sermon ... Oh aye, ye had tae attend. That's whit Ah'm tellin' ye, ye had tae attend it ... we [women] had tae go, Ah wid go ... sometimes we went as a family an' other times Ah jist went on ma own. But then ye had a lot o' missions at that time ... an ye had tae go tae that every night in the week ... a ful' week. Every night in the week ye had tae go ... Aye, the missioners came an' they gave ye a sermon an' the telt ye their experiences o' the countries they were in y'know ... a religious thing. (Cassie Kane SA1997:23)

Missionary fathers like the Vincentians inspiring the creation of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart in Port Glasgow in 1878 (Souvenir 1929:13) were crucial in retaining the support of the Catholic population. The confraternities were used to ensure that church attendance remained high and that the women, who controlled the household and the direction of the children, remained true to the teaching of the confraternity's spiritual director. The Confraternity of the Sacred Heart taught that attendance at holy communion, and regularly partaking of this sacrament, was paramount. In the course of consecration

the host becomes Christ's body and blood present on the altar. It is then not simply a wafer mass-produced to serve thousands of communicants at hundreds of masses around the country. When one receives Holy Communion, one receives Christ in the form of the host to be present within the soul.

> People believe that's a miracle that's ... taking place on the altar. We believe it's the body and blood of Our Lord [transformed] intae the Eucharist so, when ye receive Holy Communion ye receive the body and blood of Our Lord.
> (Paddy Collins SA1998:17)

The church teaches that the more often one receives the host, the stronger the soul becomes. Yet, there was not always consensus on this. Counter arguments against this doctrine were presented by the seventeenth century predestinatory Jansenism movement, which rebuked the idea that one could make oneself more worthy, thus dissuading ordinary believers from receiving the holy Eucharist. It also precipitated the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, which was set up to challenge its views, hence the Confraternity's dedication to teaching the benefits of regular attendance at Holy Communion in 1930's Port Glasgow. Jansenism was no longer a threat to the church; the challenge to the church was coming from the social iniquities created by poverty.

The success of the Confraternity, especially among the women of the parish, becomes obvious from the record. By 1929, the Rev. J. Ryan, the spiritual director of St. John's women branch of the Confraternity, could claim that "the church is packed to overflowing on the meeting nights; crowded guilds receive Holy Communion on the Sunday mornings" (anon. 1929:17). The women attending this branch harboured "a profound admiration for the earnestness and zeal, the whole-heartedness of their director whose constant care is their spiritual welfare. Their loyalty is superb." (anon. 1929:17) Among

the gifts made to the church by the women's branch were the golden chalice "for the precious blood", the golden ciborium for communion, the silver sanctuary lamp where the light of Christ present at the Mass burns, the golden monstrance for the adoration of the Sacred Heart at benediction and the stations of the cross. If the women's devotion to the parish priest as their leader and spiritual guide was as committed as their efforts to provide the proper sacred vessels and accessories, then one cannot be surprised if they showed an inclination towards following his advice on worldly, political and social matters. Liz McKenna's experience shows how devotion to the church did not necessarily make one devoid of other, more earthly convictions; even she sought to accommodate both her religious and political views in harmony and with the church's teaching. The priest was confident enough in the congregation's understanding and commitment to the thinking of the church on political matters, to advise them to vote as they wished. His encouragement to act freely in the democratic process was tempered, as we have heard above, with a warning not to entertain communism.

> They [church] didn't worry aboot ye bein' in the Labour Party. In fact they used tae accuse the priest o' tellin' ye tae vote Labour, but that wisnae true. He said, 'Jist vote whits in yer own hearts, whit you think's right. Ah'm no' tellin' ye whit tae vote but you vote whit ye think's right. (Liz McKenna SA1997:30)

The men of the parish were considered to be more at risk from secular society and the temptations of political thought. So, it is not surprising that as well as the numerous outlets set up for their recreation there was also a male division of St. John's Confraternity of the Sacred Heart. The priests would not of course, leave the fate of the Confraternity to the zeal or otherwise of the adult population only. It was important that from a young age Catholics were made aware of the importance of attending these church organisations and

minding their religious duties.

6.4.1 Junior Confraternity: League of the White Star

The League of the White Star was the vehicle for guiding young Catholics in the ways of the Sacred Heart, i.e. to encourage regular attendance at the sacraments, especially communion. Cathie Hagan considers Port Glasgow's housing allocation and religious/cultural spatial divisions as a crucial factor in making the White Star League a popular and unmitigated success.

> All the poor Catholics got put tae George Street [Bay Area]. Those and such as those got John Wood Street or Glasgow Road ... the name George Street got, there were that many in it, hunners o' weans. (Cathie Hagan SA1998:09)

The League of the White Star was composed of units or divisions of youngsters who combined under the banner of their chosen saint to attend Sunday mass and other services (cf. Appendix Figure 55). The cramped and densely populated Bay Area with its high concentration of Catholic children was ideal for the League, as it was based on the regular coming together of groups of children. The Bay Area streets and tenements provided ready-made groups. The League provided these groups with a focus in the shape of their own saint to adore, support and rally to. However, there was also a more conventional way of managing attendance and disarming the disruptive elements of the group who may have decided that regular attendance was not for them.

J.C.: See Saint John's ... used tae be a boy's guild, every seat in that church, if you come frae George Street, Victoria Street, an' that wis a guild. Used tae go in there [church], yer shield wis up above that ... ye'll see at the end o' the seats in Saint John's church, brass rings. There used tae be a pole in there, ye hung yer sash on there. The boys guild ... The league o' the Star, The White Star League as they called it. Ye wore a wee white star on yer coat.

H.H.: An' these brass rings at the end o' the seats, there wis a pole through there?

J.C.: Pole through there an' maybe say your guild wis Saint Agnes, your shield went up there. See if you didn't attend that an' ye went tae school in the fuckin' mornin', ye were fuckin' hammered (laughter). An' that chapel wis ful'. Say it wis two streets tae make a guild. You'd a leader there, now mine's wis, he's still goin' aboot the town yet, he's eighty-odd years of age, wee Benny Lennon ... maybe thirty boys ... you went in there [church] your name wis marked aff in that book, see if you weren't in that book ..." (John Connaghan SA1990:113)

The church was keen to ensure that its laws were being adhered to and the priests were remarkable at preserving a uniformity of practice of the various clubs and confraternities of the church. The Confraternity of the Sacred Heart and junior equivalents were matched in Ireland by equally highly attended and strictly marshalled groups such as that attended by Frank McCourt in Limerick:

> Our Confraternity fills the Redemptorist church five nights a week, three for the men, one for the women, and one for the boys. There is Benediction and hymn singing in English, Irish and Latin and best of all the big powerful sermon the Redemptorist priests are famous for. Its the sermon that saves millions of Chinese and other heathens from winding up in hell with the Protestants ... the prefect [of the Confraternity] is head of a section which is thirty boys from the same lanes and streets. Every section has the name of a saint whose picture is painted on a shield stuck on top of a pole by the prefect's seat. The prefect and his assistant take the attendance and keep an eye on us so that they can give us a thump on the head in case we laugh during Benediction or commit any other sacrileges. If you miss one night the man in the office wants to know why, wants to know if you're slipping away from the Confraternity ... if you're absent twice the man in the office sends you a yellow summons to appear and explain yourself and if you're absent three times he sends The Posse, which is five or six big boys from your section who search the streets to make sure you're not out enjoying yourself when you should be on your knees at the Confraternity praying for the Chinese and other lost souls. (McCourt 1996:164-165)

As the boys of the League grew into adolescents and adults, the range of church organisations available to attract their interest became varied. Their training in the League

is at least part of the reason why church-led entertainment was popular amongst them. The importance of these close-knit Catholic guilds which were able to combine social, spatial, cultural and religious characteristics cannot be underestimated in the lives of the Port's Catholics.

6.4.2 Home-Based Worship

The variety of church social clubs and such-like methods of entertainment was not so great for the female population. Whether this reflected a pattern of life expected by and for the female population generally, or the fact that the church chose to advocate this for its women parishioners, is debatable. What is certain is that it was largely the women who carried the message of the parish priest and the missionaries back to the family home. In this sense the church was at least conspiring with received wisdom that the home was a female domain. It was the women who spent most of their in the home and who were the accepted masters of the domestic environment.

> Ah done it! Hid tae. Neillie widn't o' hammered in a nail fur ye. Ma mother learnt us all how tae dae it. Ma mother did all her own decoratin'. Whether they didn't like daein it or no' ah don't know. Even in this hoose if ah wis goin' tae decorate this livin' room ah wid rise at seven o' clock an' start tae decorate this whole place an' ah wis finished at four o' clock in the efternoon an' everything back intae place. Jist constantly work at it. Aye, very few men that did decoratin' it wis all the wimen. (Cassie Kane SA1998:10)

It made sense to target the women if the church wished to enter the homes of the Catholic community and make the decoration of walls and living space with religious imagery popular.

This situation was at the very least fortuitous for the parish priest and the missionary brothers who came with their particular world view to St. John's parish. Part of the latter's

remit was to impart their cosmopolitan religious perspective and provide a view of the universal image of the Catholic church to local Catholic communities. The method of combining church-based religious practice with home-centred devotion would have been an appealing and trusted method to those wise in the ways of winning souls for the church and one which the traditional predilection of the Irish Catholics towards personal piety and adoration made profitable.

The Irish were not alone in maintaining a tradition of home-centred religious observance. There were other rural communities across Europe where established church-centred religious observances were not possible or had failed to penetrate. Gábor Barna observes: "Besides the church, the home was always the important centre of religious life. The dwelling house was ... the cultic centre of numerous events in family life." (Barna 1994:106) Barna's description of a typical Hungarian peasant "cultic centre" portrays it as an often very elaborate space given over to permanent home-based religious worship. Holy icons and numerous religious images were used to create what one might call a shrine. Whatever the peasant rural dwelling in Ireland was like, it would probably not have been as homely as the Hungarian peasant homes of the 1920s and 30s described by Barna. Certainly, the tenement dwellings the Irish and their descendants inhabited in the Port were not spacious enough to allow any segment of it to be given over to a place of permanent family worship.

> Ah mean the toon, George Street, Victoria Street an' even where Ah lived [Station Rd] the rooms ... all ye could get in it wis a bed, ye couldn't even get a chair in it, they were that small. An' in yer livin' room part well they'd two, they callt them recess beds and there wis a partition between these two beds, an' that's all ye had, ye only had space tae walk along ... there wis no space in them.
> (Cassie Kane SA1998:11)

Nevertheless, home-based devotion was practised and the Sacred Heart Confraternity and the mission movement encouraged its development. There is little evidence among those interviewed of instruction being given on how this should be done, but missionaries perhaps understood and made use of the traditional inclinations of the Port's Catholic community to feel as close to the spiritual world at home as in a designated place of worship.

6.5 Images Made Holy

> There would come times, maybe a mission would come. People would knock up the money tae buy a holy picture ... oot the chapel. (Ella Wilson SA1998:16)

The significant fact here is not so much the holy picture, but the fact that the desire, need or expectation to purchase such an item required money to be "knock[ed] up" in order to pay for it on the spot. Money was a vital commodity.

6.5.1 Icons at All Cost?

> To working class people money is life, and it's true. (Cassie Graham SA1990:115)

Despite the poverty these families suffered in inter-war Port Glasgow, the struggle to get the money to buy a picture or a relic from the missions was considered worth the effort. Many of the images adorning the walls of Catholic homes were acquired through the desperate struggle of "knocking up" extra money, and we must not assume that these items could be bought in every case for little money. If the missionaries brought statues or statuettes then many women would manage to find the money to buy one of these for the

home. We should be in no doubt that it was the women who were responsible for these purchases. The money would necessarily come from the domestic budget and not from the money retained by the husband or father of the family. This perhaps sheds a bit more light on why the church relied on the female community and encouraged them to attend the Sacred Heart Confraternity services.

We have already heard above from Cassie Kane who felt compelled to attend these services and she would have felt equally driven to take a holy picture or a religious relic home. One might gather the impression that in this situation the compulsion to purchase a religious item was cultivated by peer pressure and clerical influence resulting in homes full of unwanted and relatively expensive religious objects. Yet the Catholic women of Port Glasgow were not unthinking and at all times true only to the church's teaching. Liz McKenna was enough of an individual to combine politics with her Catholicism and was obviously capable of making considered decisions on her support or otherwise for an idea or belief. She was not unique among her peers. It is true that Catholic households at this time rarely were without religious images of one kind or another, but these items were not necessarily acquired from missionaries or the church.

> Ah think the likes o' ma maw got them frae wans comin' roon the doors maybe sellin' them. Two shillin's a week wis kinna normal.[6] We used tae hiv' packmen ... whit else did they call them, tallymen. An' they'd hiv warehooses in Glasgow, Jews. An' A feel as though they'd o' gied ye anythin' ye waanted fur aboot two shillin's a week. (Ella Wilson SA1998:16)

Ella delivered this story with no hint of irony. It made no difference to her or her mother that they were acquiring these precious items of Catholic religiosity for home worship

[6] Two shillings a week was the total amount payable for all the goods taken not just for a single religious object. Most families depended on the tally men (door-to-door salesmen) for clothes etc.

from Jewish door-to-door salesmen who had "warehouses" full of these items in Glasgow. But, in an apocryphal story concerning a Jewish salesmen pedalling his religious icons in the Port it becomes clear that the irony of this situation was not lost on everyone.

> Ah remember big Ina Hurrell, lived doon there ["Fenian Alley"], know how these men used tae come roon the doors sellin' stuff ... He went tae Ina's door, knocked it, an' she hunted him ... He wis that nice tae, he wis a Jew, an' he wis that nice an civil tae her ... but naw she wouldn't hiv it, she says, 'Don't you come back tae ma door' An' Ina had a big loud voice an' she say, 'Y'know, yous yins crucified Christ.' He said, 'But, missus that wis two thousand years ago.' Ina says, 'Ah don't care, Ah ony heard aboot it yesterday. (Emi Donnelly SA2001:011)

The items themselves, pictures or statuettes, were of little sacred or spiritual value without the spiritual or magical powers of the priest being bestowed upon them in order to make them holy. Catholics believed that the powers of the priest were transferable to immovable objects. Today and for some years past, people usually take the items to be made holy with them when going to confession. In the confessional, the priest will say the blessing over the objects. In the 1920s and 30s, when there was perhaps more of a demand on the priest's power to convert images into holy objects, the blessing was more of a communal event.

> Most people took their stuff tae a mission. The missioner, every night he came oot an' ye hid a sermon, there wis always a long sermon wi' the missioners, an' then at the end o' the sermon he wid [say] 'Anybody got anythin' tae be blessed?', crucifixes or medals or anythin' like that, rosary beads, an' he wid bless them eftir the sermon ... he just done it aff the pulpit. Everybody would hold up their crucifix or their rosary beads or their medals an' he would get the holy water an' just spread it roon' an' bless everythin'. (Paddy Collins SA1998:17)

Alternatively, one could wait until the priest arrived at one's home on his regular visit and produce before him the item to be blessed. The fact that this holy act was carried out in the house made it even more significant. Of course, the house itself must be blessed by

the priest before it could be considered safe from evil spirits and the ghosts of the past.

C.H.: He usually blessed your house ... the priest came round every Catholic [family] and blessed their house.

H.H.: Did ye ask him tae dae that?

C.H.: Naw. He came round himself ... that wis very important. Ye didn't feel the house wis right 'til it was blessed. (Cathie Hagan SA1998:18)

6.5.2 Protection for the Home

The significance of the priest's blessing lies in the perceived consequences of the act for the home, its contents and those who lived there. Chalk statues of saints and pictures of the same or scenes from the Bible took on a sacred meaning and spiritual power. They became tools with which one could protect the family and the home from the spirit world because the priest had made them holy. Nevertheless, and a little incongruously, it would appear that hard evidence in the shape of the priest's signature on the reverse of the Sacred Heart picture, was considered a useful adjunct to him blessing the house and all its religious contents.

H.H.: What was the most common holy picture that people would've had?

C.H. & P.C.: Sacred Heart ... every house had a picture of the Sacred Heart. It was a great big picture tae, the Sacred Heart. Signed by the priest when he came tae bless yer house. (Cathie Hagan & Paddy Collins SA1998:18)

Important as the blessed and signed picture of the Sacred Heart was, it was often not considered enough to keep the spirit world at bay. Nor did it suffice in many homes as testimony to the family's commitment to the Catholic faith.

> You'd hiv three maybe in a set-in bed, wan on each wall ... Sacred Heart wis wan o' them. An' wan o' them wis ...well, it wis Our Lady, but then ye had all different things like Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour...Ah remember a big phota o' the Pope, Pope Pious the Twelfth...Saint Theresa, wi' the roses ... the Little Flower of Jesus ... an' there wis wan o' Saint Patrick, but ah can't remember if that wis in the bed or somewhere else in the house. Ye had them all over the place...an' ye'd all sorts of statues and crosses and a crucifix ... Everybody had a crucifix above most beds.[7] (Hugo & Cathie Hagan SA1998:18)

There can be no doubt that through these objects Catholic families were bringing the power of the church and, more importantly, of the priest into the home (cf. Appendix Figure 56). Although pictures were not strictly sacramentals, they were objects of devotion and carried the blessing of the priest. This made them the focus of domestic religious intentions and assisted in keeping the home free from unwanted and dangerous spirits. "Sacramentals are part of the sign language of the liturgy and are used by the Faithful to enable them to sanctify various occasions in life through the intercession of the church." (Lysaght 1994:194) As a specific example of the power of sacramentals and their uses Lysaght claims that holy water obtained from the church was used for "normal religious purposes" and a wide variety of non-religious ones. "Sufficeth to say that it was considered powerful protection against supernatural beings and agents." (Lysaght 1994:194)

Arguably, the perfect situation to employ the protective properties of holy water was when death visited the home and the powers of the other world were present, embracing all those close to the deceased.

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[7] Hugo's family home was a room and kitchen dwelling in which there was two set-in beds, each boasting at least three holy pictures.

6.6 Wakes and Holy Water: Helping the Dead and the Living

> Everybody had Holy Waater in the house in case of death ... an' everybody had a communion set in the house, everybody had that in the house ... it's a silver plate an' a wee chalice, a crucifix an' somethin' tae put water in, an' candles [and] candlesticks. Most families had that in case o' a death, priest had tae come an' he would have tae get this for the last rites. (Paddy Collins SA1998:17)

6.6.1 Concern for the Soul

Not everyone had the opportunity to receive Holy Communion from the priest as part of the last rites. People who died suddenly were usually "dressed" and in their coffin in the family home before the priest arrived. Even so, it was absolutely essential that the priest came to the deceased's home to carry out his blessing and use his supernatural powers for the immediate protection of the family and friends from the agents of the other world.

> That wis tae wipe oot any evil spirits. While the house wis blessed wi' holy waater ye didn't get any evil spirits in it. (Paddy Collins SA1998:17)

The priest's task was more than to bless the house and protect the living against evil spirits; his mission was to assist the soul of the deceased in its journey to the Kingdom of God, which was not considered by any stretch of the imagination a certain destination. Sins have to be atoned for and if one dies in a state of sin the Catholic church teaches that the soul resides in purgatory until cleansed and fit in the sight of God to enter His Kingdom.

> If there wis a death in the family, whoever it was that died, unfortunately, well they'd be taken home and in most cases they'd be put in the room ... the windas would be blacked off an' that an' the priest would come up an' he would bless the place, and the coffin, and the body. And then there would be prayers said for the family ... they would also say prayers ... see at that time there was a great belief in purgatory. So, whoever the deceased was they'd [priest and family] be praying

> for the souls in purgatory as well, that died ten, fifteen years ago, they were waitin' tae come frae Purgatory tae heaven, so there wid be prayers said for them. (Hugo Hagan SA1998:17)

Purgatory has the rather distasteful image of a place where one must languish for one's sins. But, it also represents a place of hope within a religious culture based on the duality of eternal glory in the heaven and everlasting damnation in the fires of Hell. Certainly, the popular prayers offered for the deceased by the priest, family and friends at the coffin-side were not lamenting the probability of Purgatory and a limbo existence in the other world for the souls of those they mourned. The popular Catholic prayers for the dead might be said to be celebratory.

> An' of course, ye said the rosary an' it's maybe a funny thing, at the time of death ye said the "five joyful mysteries" ... which might sound a bit funny tae people that don't know it, they'd be sayin', 'My God, how can ye be joyful about somebody that's dead.' But, that's whit ye done, ye said the five joyful mysteries ... that's the rosary ... that's somethin' that's always said for people who had died. (Hugo Hagan SA1998:17)

Joyous prayers were recited to celebrate the deliverance of the deceased's soul into the spiritual Kingdom of God (cf. Appendix Figure 57), even if the belief was that it was not going straight there.

6.6.2 Celebration and Support

The idea of celebrating the dead and guarding against covetous evil spirits gathering around the corpse and the family was exemplified in the most traditional Roman Catholic, Irish fashion through the lykewake, or more simply, the Wake. The lyke was an unburied corpse and the lykewake or "corpse watch" was the constant watch over it until burial. Originally intended to ward off evil spirits it was meant to be a solemn,

decorous occasion with more emphasis on watching during the night than during the day (Gordon 1984:24). The wake is perhaps the most commonly understood or acknowledged Irish ritual known to Scottish secular society. "The wake was the centre of the funeral ... often as not, it was drunken clamour and unsteady dancing that crashed in upon the spirit of the deceased ... People from all over the village would come, have a glass or two, and sit about telling stories or gossiping." (Shorter 1975:212) Shorter's insight into the wake comes not from Scotland or indeed Ireland, but from Brittany. He concludes by stating that in Brittany, "the invited neighbours thought as much of their stomachs as of the praying and chanting, above all of having some crêpes". It would appear that there was not much difference between this traditional Breton celebration of death and the sort of wake one could expect in 1930s Port Glasgow.

C.G.: Stayed there wi' the corpse and they came from every part of the town, the house was ful' tae the door. An' it wis like a party. There wis a table pit oot ... a wee table that somebody would've lent them. An' there wis saucers lyin' an' ye'd tabacca in wan, n' cigarettes in another, n' snuff for wans at the wake ... tellin' stories like a party. An' the corpse lyin' in the corner, in the same room.

H.H.: How long would a wake last?

C.G.: Three days. They'd go home and then come back the next night until they [deceased] were buried.

H.H.: Did they get drunk?

C.G.: Oh aye, did ye ever know an Irishman that didn't? Jist like a party, wisn't like a funeral. See ye forgot yer worries while this wis goin' on. It wisn't that ye didn't think anything o' them [deceased]. They just forgot, wan tellin' a better story than the other ... the Mays in the Alley, they were all big hearty men an' ye could hear their laughter at the fit o' the stair. (Cassie Graham SA1998:16)

There would not appear to be much of a religious or ritual content in this account of a wake in Port Glasgow. Rather, the whole affair seems to be geared round the

opportunity to meet friends and have a good time smoking, eating and drinking. In fact, Cassie Graham remembers very little in the way of prayers or spiritual intercessions being offered on behalf of the deceased.

> Not a prayer said. They came in an' took wan look at the body an' sit doon, that wis it. Never said a prayer. (Cassie Graham SA1998:16)

All in all, it sounds remarkably like Shorter's account of a traditional Breton wake. It also reads very much like an account of a twentieth century wake in Achill Island off Ireland's west coast. "I was taken to my first wake when I was nine after a distant relative of my father succumbed to one of the cancers that seemed to ravage the Island. The corpse was dressed in the man's best brown suit and laid out in the open coffin placed in the cramped front sitting room of the wake house. Groups of adults were sitting chatting, plates of snuff and cigarettes taken out of their pockets and arranged in a circle were being passed around: other guests were being fed in the kitchen and men offered bottles of beer." (Toolis 1995:20)

However, Toolis found that, because of his young years, the onus of securing a trouble-free passage for the deceased relative's spiritual journey was left to him. The prayers of the young are given a special place in the Roman Catholic ritual of prayers of intercession, to the communion of saints, for the repose of the soul. Untouched by the evils of secular society, the prayers of a child are deemed to hold great importance in the eyes of the church. "The Islanders believed that the prayers of the sexually innocent children went straight to heaven, so I was encouraged to sit and pray at the makeshift altar next to the wooden casket ... I knelt down and looked at the waxy figure, the mouth

wedged shut and the bloodless hands knotted together with rosary beads." (Toolis 1995:21)

Unlike the inhabitants of Achill Island, the Port's Catholic community had grown under the regular instruction and religious demands of the organised church which, as is noted above, was often keen to demonstrate its ability to make responsible citizens of its Irish flock in Scotland. However, not everyone's experience of a wake in Port Glasgow around the 1930s was devoid of adult religious rite.

> In them days they didn't even take them [deceased] tae the chapel they were buried out the house ... if ye died they kept ye in the house for three days, eh two nights n' ye were buried on the third day. That wis like a wake for two days, everybody was in. Ye usually got a half [whisky] or somethin' like that an' cigarettes, there wis a whole crowd in the two nights. They stayed all night [till] six o' clock in the mornin'. They were lookin' for a cup o'tea or somethin' tae eat, maybe sandwiches during the night ... maybe two or three times during the night ... Just sittin' there chaffin', spinning yarns an' jokes ... Aye, well, sometimes ye would say the rosary. Say the rosary about 8 or 9 o'clock at night an' that wis it. Sit there until 6 o'clock in the mornin' an' then 'right, Ah'm away hame'. Then the priest came tae the house tae say the last prayers, the coffin wis taken oot n' put ontae the hearse an' oot tae the cemetery. (Paddy Collins SA1998:18)

So, there may be discrepancies in personal accounts regarding the extent to which prayers filled the night in the wake house, but there is no disputing the nature of the celebration which was taking place. Apart from the very obvious similarities in the way wakes in Scotland, Ireland and Brittany were conducted there was one other less obvious but extremely significant factor binding these places and their Catholic death rituals together. For all the concern generated by the church about Catholic religious ritual being church led, death did not attract the attention of the church in the 1930s in the way it does in today's society.

The priest would not be unaware of the death of one of his congregation, for friends and family members would report the news to ensure prayers were offered for the soul of the deceased during mass in the days after death and before the funeral. Yet once he was satisfied that the house, coffin and body were blessed and the necessary prayers said, the priest was not part of the death ritual as it existed at that time in the family home.

> The priest didn't come tae the house. Ye [corpse] didn't go tae the chapel in them days. Ye got buried from yer own home ... Ye had tae wait till the funeral for the priest to come (Cassie Graham SA1998:16)

It could be argued that the priest, by staying clear of the house at this critical time, encouraged the continuation of the wake tradition, or it could be the case that he felt his presence would have done little to stop the celebration. Either way, the clergy viewed wakes as a product of the traditional Irish folk culture that many Port people represented. A priest's presence at a wake may have attracted a proportion of blame to the church for their continuation and the Catholic Church was certainly not in favour of that (O'Suilleabhain 1967:19-23).

For at least three days - possibly more, depending on when weekends and holiday periods fell - a family was left to cope with death in the household. If these small houses were inadequate when all the family were in reasonable health, they were grossly inadequate under the circumstances of death. Where a family were surviving in two rooms, they now had to make do in one, i.e. the kitchen. For those living in single-ends, there was absolutely no escape. And we must not lose sight of the fact that the body of

the deceased was regularly attended to and prepared for burial in the same space and usually by a woman.

> Women used tae dress the bodies ... aye, the women done that, jist the same way they delivered the weans ... women were adept at washin' the bodies. It wis only certain people that done it, it jist wisn't anybody, there wis usually somebody an' ye usually had them booked before the person died. (Agnes Mulholland SA2001:002)

Significantly, even when undertaking became a commercial concern in the town sufficient consideration was given by the company to the tradition of a woman tending the bodies of those being prepared for burial. Even in the world of business it remained a woman's job to wash and dress the dead.

> The women wid waash the body right enough. The oldest woman in the house. They would dress the body. An' then later on Mrs Johnstone of P. B. Wright's, undertakers, anybody died she would come out an' waash the body. (Paddy Collins SA1998:18)

The crowd who came to mourn was providing a different service to the family of the dead person in their attempts to manage the wake and funeral arrangements in such cramped and poor conditions. The mourners provided the practical and spiritual assistance for the family to survive the days before the church took over and buried the remains of their loved one. As Cassie says above, "Ye forgot yer worries while this wis goin' on". The practical element is self-evident in that companionship and neighbourliness helped to get one through the duties precipitated by a family bereavement, i.e. dealing with mourners and the practicalities of managing the home.

Interviewees made regular reference to the fact that in the inter-war period in these miasmic streets and closes death was a regular visitor especially among the young. The death of a child or infant is particularly tragic, especially when the family network of

that time depended on large families. Yet, without becoming inured to this sort of tragedy, infant mortality and the death of young people generally among the working class was a problem in the 1930s.

Infant mortality rates

Year	Birth-rate per 1,000 population	Infant mortality-rate per 1000 births	Death –rate (per 1,000) of age-group population		
			1-4	5-9	10-14
1928	19.97	85.7	11.5	2.6	1.7
1929	19.22	86.8	11.8	2.4	1.9
1930	19.58	83.0	10.0	2.6	1.8
1931	19.04	81.8	9.8	2.4	1.5
1932	18.64	86.2	10.2	2.5	1.6
1933	17.62	81.1	8.0	2.3	1.6
1934	18.00	77.7	9.0	2.7	1.6
1935	17.75	76.8	6.8	2.2	1.6
1936	17.91	82.3	7.6	2.1	1.4
1937	17.6	80.0	6.9	2.1	1.4

Table 18[8]

The reduced infant mortality rate in 1937 relates to the reduced birth rate recorded for that year. Interestingly, however, the Registrar General draws attention in his report to the fact that with the exception of 1933 the number of births during the year 1937 was the lowest that had been recorded in Scotland. Yet, marriages recorded in Scotland in 1937 numbered 38, 345 which was 431 more than the previous year and that, apart from the post-war years pf 1919-1921,the number of marriages and the marriage rate had been the highest recorded in Scotland since 1873. (AR. Cmd 5713. pp66-67)

Stories of such tragedies affecting those interviewed are recalled with an incredible matter-of-factness, which only those who lived through it can convey.

[8] Annual Report of the Department of Health for Scotland, 1937-1938. Cmd 5713:66-67

> Aye, an awful lot o' people died in them days, a lot o' death ... weans. Ah'd a sister o' seventeen died o' TB an' five month eftir another wan ten year old, scourge in them days. Never hear tell o' it now. (Cassie Graham SA1998:14)

Yet, we must not assume that people became used to the death of the weak and the young, or that they were affected less by the death of a child than the death of an earning adult.

> So wan [twin] wis red-haired the other wis blonde. The wan that wis blonde took whooping cough when he wis a fortnight old an' he wis very ill wi' it ... an' then the other boy when he wis about a year an' three months, he took teething trouble ... so he took pneumonia through cuttin' teeth. We sat up wi' him night and day [at the infirmary]. An' ma brother came ... he says, 'Come on, Ah'll let ye get home.' So, he let me go home. About an hour later he came up, he says, 'They've took away what was keeping him breathin, he's dead.' A year an' three months. He was a lively wee boy because he would sit in the pram and everybody that went by he wid stick his han' oot and pull whatever they had, their coat or somethin'. The other fella was quiet, such a wee quiet wee boy, but he grew intae a big boy he wis so heavy. He cried the whole time that boy [his brother] was in hospital. Never stopped crying. Infact we often said 'he cried him out of the world.' An' he grew intae a bonny wee boy ... anyway he wis about five when wan o' ma neighbours upstairs she shouts, 'Mrs McKenna ... yer wee boy's doon the back an' he's playin' wi' lighted linoleum. Ah says 'Oh my God' Ah never knew he went oot the hoose. So Ellen went away down tae catch him an' he run frae her ... up the stair, an' there were three wee stairs runnin' up intae the landin' an' he fell an' he burst open his head. So that was the start. Aboot two days after it ... the doctor put the stitches in ... an' on the Saturday mornin' he took a turn for the worse. He took one convulsion after the other, we had him in the house for, y'know, the time o' the Blitz. We had him in the house all that time. Three weeks in a coma an' that child knew nothing. But somebody, ma mother sat with him an' Ah sat with him, an' when Ah couldn't, the daddy would sit with him ... naw, he died. Five and a half. He came out the coma an' the funny thing about it, ma mother had sat wi' him aw these weeks, an' Ah sat wi' him. An' Ah wis in maself, ma father had said tae ma mother, 'Ah'm workin' Sunday' and she said, 'That's all right. Ah'll go down an' make yer dinner for ye comin' in at night.' So she went down that Sunday, and that Sunday the boy passed away, n' Ah wis the only one that was in the house with him. Ah'd a brother livin' next door but Ah didnae go intae them, Ah just sat and Ah held him. Ah knew the ... mouth became open n' Ah got a piece of bandage and Ah bandaged up his head and his mouth, n' Ah was still sittin' with him when ma brother came in from the Port ... an' he says "What's wrong?" says I, 'He's died, he's away. That's the two of them away.' (Liz McKenna SA1997:29)

We cannot begin to plumb the depth of a mother's despair at a time of such tragedy; what we must do is recognise that by celebrating death through the wake, families were not denigrating the life lost, they were preparing and aiding a soul for its journey to the after-life. It was a leaving party for the soul. The spiritual side of such events displayed more about what people believed was important regarding the afterlife than any attachment they might have had for the tenets of the church. These events bared the soul of the community and what they believed in. This had as much, if not more, to do with their sense of Irishness as with their Catholicism. And everything they did surrounding the matter of death was designed to assist the soul in making a clean break with this life and a trouble-free passage to the next.

> Ah wis cryin' ma eyes oot fur a woman wan time when she wis tellin' me about her son. He wis married but the mother says the wife wis workin' an' the mother says, 'Ah'll take him up tae ma hoose an' look after him.' An' it got worse an' they thought he wis dyin' an' they lit the candle. A wean or anythin' wis dyin' in the house they held a candle over them, a lighted candle. He wis unconscious but he came round an' when he seen the candle lit he knew. 'Oh naw maw', he says, 'Oh naw'. Ah wis cryin' ma eyes out in sympathy for them ... Ah wis that sorry for her ... he knew he was dyin' when he seen the candle lit. Only a young man tae, in his twenties. It wis lightin' their way intae the next world. (Cassie Graham SA1998:16)

Death and the Catholic Irish wake ritual serve as the ideal microcosm for viewing their overall sense of identity. Not only the actions, the language used at wakes in the 1930s serves to illustrate the strength of Irishness inherent in the community. Paddy Collins relates a wake story regularly told by his uncle John Burns:

> A wee humphy bloke, he died. An' they put him in the coffin. They had tae tie him doon because he had the humphy back. They had tae tie him doon wi' a bit o' cord. An' eh this guy is a bit of a ventriloquist and this guy cuts the cord and the wee humphy guy sits up an' this ventriloquist says, 'Who's eaten ma praities?' An' they all run out the door. (Paddy Collins SA1991:12)

The use of the word "praitie", meaning potato in Donegal Irish, ably demonstrates just how deep the sense of Irishness was among the members of the Port's town centre. When Cassie Graham questioned above if we had ever heard of "an Irishman that didn't take a drink" she was not referring literally to an Irishman or Irishmen. It is true that her father was one of the many Irishmen who lived in the Port. However, Cassie was using the term "Irishman" to mean all those men who may have attended a wake in the Port town centre in the inter-war period. And whilst many of the town centre dwellers were of Irish stock, many of them were Scottish by birth. However, "Irishman" in Cassie's vocabulary had a more general meaning pertaining to all those men likely to be in attendance at a wake involving her family. She would not be alone in her generation in using this generic term to describe mourners at town centre wakes. And the wake was accepted as an Irish spectacle. Wake stories like the one above also serve to show just how central to the whole event stories were. Nothing would do but someone should, whilst attending the house of the dead, tell a story about the dead coming suddenly to life! Just as nurses will tell you that they often survive their shift by trivialising the horrors they have to deal with, the Irish Catholics in inter-war Port Glasgow survived the trauma of death in the family through the medium of the wake and the funny story. Storytelling was an integral part of the wake, just as important and compatible with the smoking, drinking, eating and amusements, which could make the event an almost riotous affair at times[9]. The wake was as religious a ritual to the Port's "Irish"

[9] Cf. O'Suilleabhain (1967).

community in the inter-war period as the very church-oriented funeral rite is to the descendants of these people in today's community.

A propensity towards guarding against supernatural beings was not peculiar to the Irish culture. However, in early twentieth century Lowland Scotland, the powerhouse of the British manufacturing industry and noble testament to the Protestant work ethic, such inclination towards the supernatural, the mysterious and the miraculous, was considered at once identifiably Irish and Roman Catholic. This was a worry to the non-Catholic establishment. It fitted neatly into the already established view of the backward Irish. The truth is that many of the Port's Irish Catholics as late as the inter-war period and beyond *were* as inclined towards the belief in the supernatural as their ancestors had been before them.

6.7 Banshees and Ghost Stories

> Oh, ma mother was aye ... had the banshee at the door ... see ma mother used tae tell us a lot o' stories about things that happened in Ireland ... we thought it wis great, we thought it wis all true whit she wis sayin', but it was all jist superstitions an' made up things ... but it kept ye goin'. (Josie Watson SA1997:27)

The banshee was not simply a wandering spirit, as most ghosts were thought to be; it was a female fairy carrying bad news to those she visited. By howling and screaming outside the family house she heralded the imminent death of a family member. Stories of the banshee were rarely told in a light-hearted fashion; rather, they were commonly related as true and actual occurrences[10]. Not surprisingly, they would instil fear into the heart of the listener and sometimes into the heart of the storyteller.

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[10] Cf. Lysaght (1986).

> Many a time, ma father wis a great wan for the ghost stories an' he wis frightened, he frightened 'issel [himself] (laughter) ...oul' Irishman, very superstitious. (Cassie Graham SA1998:11)

However, these stories and truisms were part of the Irish culture and were keenly sought by young Port Catholics as entertainment. It was not unusual for a good storyteller to attract a crowd ready to subject themselves to whatever terrors he would unleash upon them.

> Oul' John Black ... ma mother's uncle, ma grand uncle, he stayed at the Glen, he wis a riviter tae. He came from a place called Magharra, County Fermanagh, an' he wis a storyteller. Used tae come up tae our house on a Sunday an every ... the word would go round, John Black wis in ma granny's house, all the kids came from all down the street, maybe twenty or thirty kids, all intae oor hoose, sittin' on the floor listenin' tae oul John tellin' these yarns, an' he could spin a good yarn tae ... he wis tellin' ghost stories, an' all sorts o' stories like that about the wee folk an' the fairies ... See, there was a lot o' that in the town then because there wis no telly an' ye would get all the characters, again most of them were Irish or of Irish descent ... they knew all the ghost stories an' therefore ah suppose it was part o' their heritage, their culture, tae sit an' tell stories, ghost stories, an' it wis a way o' passin' the night. (Paddy Collins & Hugo Hagan SA1998:18)

The Irish brought with them and handed down to following generations their strong beliefs about the spirit world not being divorced from the present and that the real world lived side by side with "the other world". These beliefs, far from being dispelled by what they met in Port Glasgow, found an ally in the formal church worship. The blessed mysteries of the mass and the imagery evoked through the language and the act of consecration were matched only by the supernatural powers of the priest to act as intercessor with God on the people's behalf. It was he who had the power to forgive sins through intercession with God, and it was he who made "holy" ordinary items of a religious nature with which the family could ward off evil in the home and protect themselves from lost souls and banshees. Not only did they find a comforter in the rituals

of the Catholic church; their own traditional beliefs were encouraged not by the Scottish Bishop but by the missionary brothers and Irish priests who were necessarily brought to Scotland to assist the depleted Scottish priesthood.

6.8 Sacramentals and Prayer

6.8.1 The Power to Protect

Barna claims that the influence of the Catholic church in Hungary could be seen in the portrayals and religious objects to be found in family homes. These specific items, he says, were not there by chance or coincidence but were "tangible expressions of the forms of devotion preferred by the official churches" (Barna 1994:108). He continues this theme by stating that the "miraculous pictures and statues brought home from places of pilgrimage 'brought back' the sacred place into the home" (Barna 1994:114).

The Irish Catholics in Port Glasgow during the 1920s and 1930s were without the means to consider making pilgrimages abroad. Family commitments would have made it almost impossible for the women of the congregation to free themselves from their domestic situation for the time required on a pilgrimage. This made the packman's service important in obtaining sacramentals but, more importantly, it made the position of the priest in blessing these items crucial. Even more crucial to the development of a congregation devoted to the power of sacramentals were the missionary fathers who brought with them objects and portrayals from holy places. Again, we are witnessing here the "world view" which Lysaght claims was central to Catholicism in Ireland, where holy places were more common and within reach, being brought to the Port's Irish Catholic community through

the missionary movement. Perhaps this provides us with another reason why Ella Wilson and her contemporaries struggled hard to "knock up" the money to buy holy things from the missions. They carried a special significance having been brought from distant holy places, like Lourdes, Fatima or Prague, by holy people (cf. Appendix Figure 58). Even those not particularly keen on religious imagery struggled with their conscience when deciding how to rid themselves of it.

> It wis the Child o' Prague, it wis a wee statue, like a king wi' a crown. Ah don't know anythin' about it ... Ah had a statue o' that king ... Ah think it wis Grace Cannie that gave me it. Grace didn't waant it cause she wis gettin' married tae a Protestant. So, Ah got the statue an' it wis up there on tap o' the wardrobe for a while, an' Ah think Ah gied it intae the school tae wan o' the teachers ... ye jist couldn't find it in yer heart tae pit it in the bin. (Ella Wilson SA1998:16)

Sacramentals were considered to have the power to protect and cure people from spiritual as well as human ills. Lysaght talks about rosary beads being used to cure people of headaches and being worn as a potent form of protection from spirits (Lysaght 1994:196). These powers extended to other items of religious imagery and to this day remain in use as such among the Irish Catholics of Port Glasgow. The Child of Prague is one such sacramental. Cathie Hagan made use of the powers of this image by standing the statue outside the door of the family home on the eve of her daughters' wedding days. It is the belief among many of Port Glasgow's Catholics believe that this act can guarantee decent weather for the important day. Cathie recalls that the weather on both occasions was beautiful (Cathie Hagan, notes, 11 July 1998). This act of faith demonstrates the power Port Catholics attribute to statues blessed and made holy by the priest. It also provides a link to an earlier period when their ancestors practised propitiation towards the saints and the spirit world in Ireland. Such acts of faith in the saints and the power of

church-blessed holy images are inextricably linked to their adherence to Irish cultural traits such as fairy-lore, ghost stories, the banshee, not to mention weather-lore. Interestingly, recent newspaper reports have recorded a revival of similar religious customs among Romanian Orthodox believers and Catholics. "After three weeks of searing heat, Romanians are calling on the Gods to bring rain to their parched land. According to Romanian newspapers, Teoctist, the Head of the Orthodox Church, declared in the summer of 1998 'May God forgive our sins and water our fields and help us to overcome these hard times we live in.' Mainly elderly people flocked to church, kneeling in prayer in front of icons on church steps for cooler climes. ... Ancient customs were being performed in villages around Bucharest. ... One which dates back thousands of years involves a pregnant woman dancing in fields, her body draped with leaves, calling on the rain gods. In another custom called Caloianul, girls tearfully bury a male clay doll and call for the blessing of the rain gods. ... Romania has a rich tradition of mysticism. About 90 per cent of Romanians are Orthodox Christian believers and most others belong to the Catholic and Reformist churches." (*Scotsman*, 7.8.1998)

The spirit world and the saints can be called to act in various ways and different sacramentals can be put to different uses. If we return to Lysaght's point above concerning holy water and its uses, we can see how the power thought to be contained in this sacramental was considered critical to the spiritual and psychological well-being of the Port's Irish Catholic population.

> Oul' weemin would have done the likes o' that. Ah was workin' [home help] an' she [client] says used tae say, 'Bring me a bottle o' holy waater', an' eh, she wis always needin' it an' Ah says, 'Ah hope your no' drinkin' that'. An' when ye'd a went intae the chapel tae get it, it wis in a big barrel at the back, just at the sacristy door ...

> She'd be blessin' the hoose every night. She wis kinna feart, wee Peggy [client's sister] died there an' she wis kinna feart o' the ghosts an' that kinna thing. A lot o' that years ago, wans feart, feart o' the ghosts ... aye, Ah think that wis whit the holy waater wis aboot. (Ella Wilson SA1998:16)

Protecting oneself from the inhabitants of the spirit world was common. As custodians of the home and protector of the family against physical calamities and spiritual evils, it was generally the women of the home who fought off these other-worldly demons. For some it was not enough to only sprinkle the rooms with holy water, it was necessary also to pray at the same time.

H.H.: The likes o' ma mother, well a whole lot o' people had them, jist a wee bottle wi' a cross on the top o' it, an' there wis a perforation in it, y'know so the holy water could come out. An ma mother used tae bless the house at night before she went tae bed.

H.H: Did she say anything or did she just sprinkle it?

H.H.: She would say the stations o' the cross, or whatever she would say herself, y'know. That was somethin' she learned aff her own people.
(Hugo Hagan SA1998:18) (cf. Appendix Figure 59)

The other world is populated not only by evil spirits but also by the souls of deceased family members that have not yet found peace with God. They are lost souls wandering the other world waiting to be united with God in his kingdom of heaven. Perhaps they died in tragic and sudden circumstances without having had the opportunity to atone for their sins, to put their earthly house in order before death took them to the spirit world. This notion was linked directly to the Catholic Church's teaching on the state of purgatory. The church teaches that the living can assist the souls of those in purgatory by praying for them; hence Hugo's mother's prayers which accompanied her ritualistic blessing of the house every night at bedtime. Spirits therefore were not in every case evil and the rituals

associated with propitiating the spirits were not in every case designed to ward them off, but to help them find peace in the spirit world.

6.8.2 Spiritual and Temporal Needs

The idea of praying for the repose of the soul of the dead, appealing to the saints on behalf of a loved-one is tightly bound into Catholic belief. Praying to the saints can also assist one to cope with the concerns of this world.

> Aye, they prayed for everything. If they wanted anythin' they prayed for it. Went tae Mass an lit candles n'that. (Paddy Collins SA1998:16)

Port Glasgow's shipyards brought their own pressures to bear on making prayer a large part of many lives, as the incidence of accidents and fatalities among those in the more dangerous trades were a source of major concern to the community.

P.C.: See any jobs that the likes o' us got (Catholics) they were all menial jobs, but the other crowd (Protestants) were all tradesmen o' some kind, joiners or loftsmen...draughts office or somethin' like that but we got the [dangerous jobs]. The most o' oor boys started as putter-ins tae the rivet squad. Then they went frae that tae the heatin'... n'they went frae the heatin' tae the rivetin' ... mostly Catholics, aye. Carpenters trade wis even more dangerous. Ye were workin' wi' oul' wires. Ye were liftin' things that were maybe three tons an' ye were workin' wi' slings n'stuff that wis ... it couldnie take it. See the Kingston Yard, they called that the 'slaughterhoose'. There wis somebody killed in it every other week, gettin' knocked aff o' stagin's or fallin' intae howls [ships cargo holds].

H.H.: So people wouldn't want tae work in the Kingston?

P.C.: Well, people had tae work. If ye got a job ye had tae work or they cut ye aff the buroo. (Paddy Collins SA1998:16)

The pressures to take work regardless of its dangers, low status and low pay were strong, but for those women who depended on the work and wages provided by their husbands and sons taking these jobs the pressure was agonisingly intense. It was also based on

personal family experience of shipyard accidents.

> Always had injuries an' if they on'y got a cut finger, it poisoned y'know that way, suppose wi' the dirt n'that ... he fell an' the caulkin' machine ... instead o' lettin' go o' the caulkin' machine they're apt when they're in an accident tae grab ontae it, an' he came down wi' the machine wi' him, an' he must've hit a rivet or some bracket or somethin' on his road down, thirty feet he fell. He had a hole in his head there, head injury, he'd a broken wrist an' a broken ankle. When he came in that night, talk aboot the war wounded. His foreman came up tae tell me, he says, ' Neillie's had an accident in the yard', he says, 'don't be gettin' excited, a small accident in the yard, he's broken his wrist.' Ah thought nothin' o' it. It wis common there wis always wans gettin' hurt in the yards, Ah never thought anythin' o' it. See when he came in, he'd a turbin o' bandages round his head an' a stoookie on his arm and wan on his leg. Know whit like that wis comin' in, like a mummy.
> (Cassie Graham SA1990:114)

The Kingston Yard's "slaughterhouse" reputation inevitably descended upon many Port families, as the casual employment offered by the yard to its unskilled and less well paid workers precipitated a regular turnover of employees. The prospect of having a young son or husband exposed to the yard's dangers was one more responsibility to be carried by an already overburdened mother or wife. In Cassie Graham's experience, it was up to her, once she had the dangers emphasised to her by a family member, to discourage her son from exposing himself to the dangers of the "slaughterhouse".

> They were always gettin' injured, always. An' an awful lot o' young people killed in the yard. Remember ma own son came the age for startin' in the yard. Big Jim [brother-in-law] says tae me 'Don't let him go intae the Kingston', he says, 'or he'll be getting' kerried intae ye dead. An' that's where Neillie [son] got started, in the Kingston servin' his time ... an' ah wis livin' in dread all the time. An' ah'd a blamed masel if anythin' had o' happened tae him. But thank God nothin' happened tae him then. It wis a common thing for boys and men tae be killed in the yards, common.
> (Cassie Graham, SA1990:114)

Cassie's son was delivered safely from the clutches of the Kingston Yard, but not without many a candle being lit and prayers said at mass or in private. The idea of enlisting the help of the saints when one was worried was routinely pursued and remains a

powerful method of appealing for assistance (cf. Appendix Figure 60).

> Oh aye, it's very prominent, if ye had any worries ye would make a novena specially tae help ye get over that worry ... there's different novenas, say maybe ye'll do a seven day novena and say nine decades of the rosary or one decade of the rosary, just depends on the novena ye're doin'. At a special time there's a novena every Tuesday that ye can do and ye go and say so many Hail Marys and light a candle in the church to maybe Saint Martha if ye're lookin' for ... some help. There's all different saints ye can make novenas tae an' they all vary in what the prayers are. (Cathie Hagan SA1998:18)

Novenas, which are a combination of prayers to a particular saint and the prayers of the rosary, could be said both within and outwith the church (cf. Appendix Figure 61). The church provided novena booklets, which allowed people to recite the prayers at home or elsewhere and so it became a popular practice. It has also been common among the Catholic families of the Port's town centre to pray as a family at home.

H.H.: Would you ever say prayers as a family?

P.C.: A lot o' families did say the rosary every night.

H.H.: Or maybe somebody else would have it in their house an' they'd say tae ye tae come over an' say the rosary.

H.H.: And there would be no priest there?

C.H.: Naw, jist people that did it themselves.
(Paddy Collins, Hugo Hagan & Cathie Hagan SA1998:18)

It was not essential that the prayers were directed towards holy images within the household. However, given the important place these items had in the daily lives of Port Glasgow's Catholics, it is certain that they would have been central to any act of home devotion.

6.8.3 Single Image Devotion: the Veneration of Mary

We have already seen how the cramped conditions of life in the Port's tenements meant there could be no comparison between these houses and Barna's Hungarian Catholic peasant households of the 1930s which accommodated "cultic centres" or corners of the home given over to religious devotion. Yet, there is a striking similarity in the essence of the pursuit of spiritual devotion in these two very different communities. Whilst the Hungarian peasants brought blessings and grace home with them from places of pilgrimage, the Port's Irish Catholics had ordinary religious images made holy in the home by the parish priest. In both situations, the necessity was to have the power of blessed sacramentals in the home to protect the home and family from spirits and to have access at all times to blessed images which contained the powers of intercession bestowed on the church and the priest by God. By praying to these sacramentals, one could invoke these powers of intercession and add the special place of a particular saint or icon to the weight of one's own prayers (cf. Appendix Figure 62).

> Religious objects not only give elements of Christian teaching a presence in the life of the different communities, but their possession also could shape the everyday religious practice and devotion of the individual or small community (e.g. the family). (Barna 1994:108)

It would be too presumptuous to suggest that if no religious icons were available at home, then no family or private home based devotion would take place. However, there is no question that possession of these religious objects greatly increased the propensity towards family and private devotion at home, especially if one felt that through evoking the power of the chosen saint one's prayers were given additional efficacy. Such was the power that these images were felt to hold that it was common for people to wear relics of

saints for whom they had a particular devotion.

H.H.: Everybody had relics. Wore relics roon' yer neck ... usually had them in a wee kinna pouch thing. A relic o' whatever saint you particularly liked or wan that ye prayed tae. (Hugo Hagan SA1998:18)

It is the view of many Catholics that there is no more persuasive voice in heaven than that of Mary, Mother of God, and popular devotion to the prayer of the holy rosary bears this out. We have already heard how the rosary featured largely in the private devotion of families in the Port. It is not surprising that many homes owned a statue of Our Lady and that the prayers of the family were directed towards this image.

P.C.: Most o' them houses about the [Fenian] Alley, Custom House Lane an' Lyon's Lane n'them. They were all kinna devout Catholics, they all said their rosary at night, the whole family wis taken in an' they said the rosary.

H.H.: Who would lead that the father or the mother?

P.C.: Well, usually the mother it wis, y'know.

H.H.: And when they were sayin' the rosary would they say it to a statue of Our Lady?

.PC.: Well, Ah suppose they would have a statue. Most houses did have a statue of Our Lady in the house. Ah remember the Wards, Sam Ward, tellin' us aboot their mother getting' them all in at night. Same wi' the McGurk's, they all said the rosary in their own house, y'know. (Paddy Collins SA1998:16)

Devotion to Mary often brought the family and families together in prayer. The church actively encouraged this and worked to bring about organisations through which it could direct this devotion[11]. Organised church devotion to Mary did not commence in St John's until 1938 when the Sodality of the Children of Mary and the Legion of Mary became dedicated organisations with the parish priest as the spiritual director. However, devotion

[11] Devotion to Mary saw a popular revival from 1854, following the publication of the Papal Bull, "Ineffabilis Deus" by Pope Pious IX, which proclaimed the dogma of the "Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary."

to Mary under the guidance of the parish priest had become an established practice before this time. The parish brochure published to mark the centenary of St. John's church described the creation and aims of the Sodality of the Children of Mary. "This modern Sodality which had its beginnings only in the latter part of 1921, but has now spread to most parts of the world, and is now suffering its baptism of blood and martyrdom in the Communist dominated parts of the world, was brought to Port Glasgow in 1938 by Rev. Simon Keane. The first meeting of the Praesidium was held on the 21 February, 1938. Its first spiritual director was Rev. Father J O'Sullivan. There are now four Praesidia, two senior and two junior. The object ... is 'the sanctification of themselves by prayer and active co-operation in Our Lady's and the churches work of crushing the head of the serpent'." (anon. 1954:63)

Significantly, this church record took the opportunity, in the politically charged setting of the Depression era, to emphasise the important role Our Lady was playing in the church's continuing battle against the atheistic forces of Communism (cf. Appendix Figure 63-64). The "Legion of Mary" built upon the tradition of family devotion to the Mother of Christ in Port Glasgow which already existed in the 1920s and 1930s, and worked towards getting more families praying in the home. Again, the target for their propaganda was the female Catholic population and the "Legion" itself was an all-female affair.

> The Legion of Mary that was a women's ... just women that went. They used tae bring the statue of Our Lady up from the church an odd night an' took it roon' the doors, an' you took it in for a night an' said the rosary an' then ye passed it on ... Our Lady of Lourdes. (Cathie Hagan SA1998:18)

We have already heard above how it was considered common to have a statue of Our Lady in most family homes, but this system of taking the statue around to Catholic family

homes to encourage prayer to Mary was not restricted to those who did not own a statue of their own. In fact, it did not operate this way at all. It was non-discriminatory in this sense and depended largely on where one's closest Catholic neighbours lived rather than whether or not they had a statue of Mary of their own. However, it would in the natural course of its travels find homes that did not have a statue. Statue-less homes did exist. These objects would not need to have been overly expensive to put them out of the reach of some mothers' purses. However, it *was* common for people to forego other items to get a statue for the home and this is recalled often enough:

> People, although they weren't that well aff they would have made sure they had that [religious images] before they had anything else, sort o' thing ... Ah mean ye wouldn't have went intae a Catholic home that didn't have a statue of Our Lady in it [or] the Sacred Heart, everybody had them. (Hugo Hagan SA1998:17)

However, perhaps for some women purchasing an image of the Sacred Heart precluded buying a statue of Our Lady. Certainly not every wife stretched the housekeeping to spend on these items.

> People that had money, only people that had money. Poor people had damn all ... couldn't afford them [statues] ... Ah wouldn't say that all hooses had them. Whit Ah mine' o' most houses Ah widda went intae, mates' hooses, wouldn't o' had any at all, but everybody would've had a Sacred Heart picture. (Ella Wilson SA1998:16)

Understandably, these items were looked after very carefully and given special treatment and consideration when needed. Apart from any supernatural powers they possessed and the true cost of their purchase, they were usually bought by some family member. This created a sentimental value for the inheritor. Nevertheless, they were not immune from the forces of reality when they met an immovable object.

> Big John's [brother-in-law] had a good big statue of Our Lady, good big sized wan aboot that [approx' 65cm] wi' a gless dome on it. So, when Pat [sister] wis flittin'

> frae John Wood street tae the [Fenian] Alley she wouldn't let this go in the flittin' ... so, she carried it over an' of course turnin' intae the Alley it hit the wall, broke the dome ... the statue wis alright but the dome, that wis it beat. (Ella Wilson SA1998:16)

The fact that the statue survived unscathed was considered a minor miracle in itself.

6.9 Domestic and Public Worship

St John's church was successfully completed because the idea touched that side of the soul of the early Irish Catholic settlers in the town that craved colour and meaning in a strange and desperate world. In the midst of poverty and disease the Irish immigrants were asked to stretch resources to provide the town with a place of worship worthy of a much more affluent community and they could only have done this through the strength of conviction that one harbours when one's very existence is at stake. The church did fulfil the notion of colour and meaning that the clerical hierarchy was determined to gain from its building. The colour was self evident from the icons and imagery and splendour of the place of worship; the meaning came largely from the regularisation of devotion and the focus the church afforded the faithful when attending to their religious duties. The canonical year boosted devotion of a public and private nature by regularising remembrance of particular saints, holy people and events.

> Devotions in the month of June for the Sacred Heart and in May for Our Lady and the likes o' November is the month of the Holy Souls, so ye tend tae go to church more then and during lent. Ye can go tae a cemetery an' ye get a special indulgence, if ye go tae a cemetery in the month of November an' say so many Hail Marys, ye get a special indulgence when ye die ... people still do that yet. Most people will go tae the cemetery in the month of November. They go anyway every week, but that's a special month because it's the month of the Holy Souls. An' ye put in yer petitions for all yer dead in the family an' the priest says all the masses in November for your family [deceased]. (Cathie Hagan SA1998:18)

Special months of devotion would be marked by a mixture of church and home-based religious observances. These observances are at once public and private. For Mary's month of May, the tradition was very much a family and home-orientated observance.

> Oh aye. Well wait'n Ah'll tell ye. Oor Mary wis awfa' good livin' [religious]. She wis the most good livin' of the whole house, an' Mary had a picture o' the Sacred Heart, she always had that an' the May alter tae Our Lady. She'd a ... statue, Our Lady, y'know. (Margaret O'Donoghue SA1997:16)

During May, all family and private devotions would be observed at the altar to Our Lady (cf. Appendix Figure 65).

> The likes o' May ye woulda put up yer statue that ye had in the house for Our Lady an' ye woulda made an altar. Jist gathered flowers, made a wee alter at the statue an' lit a candle in the month o' May. (Cathie Hagan SA1998:18)

It is hard to quantify how much of an influence these church and home-based devotions and intercessional objects had upon the Catholics of Port Glasgow and to what extent they went towards creating a sense of community among them. However, we can comfortably assume that they were crucial to making the link the church was looking for in its wish to channel the Irish cultural affinity with the "other world" and their belief in the need to propitiate spirits in the home, into church observance. It certainly made those interviewed aware of God in their daily lives in the same way as they were traditionally aware of the spirit world; that through their acts and prayers of intercession they could influence their fortune in the temporal world and affect the passage of the souls of the faithful departed.

If sacramentals and religious images were important in developing personal and family religious belief, then acts of communal worship like the group prayer meetings described above were crucial to the creation of a deeper sense of community, even if it was largely

among the female congregation of St. John's parish. But events and celebrations which precipitated street processions and open air worship involving female and male, adult and child, were even more significant in harnessing and shaping the growing sense of community which was being cultivated among the Port's Catholic congregation in the inter-war period. By the 1930s the Catholics of the Port were taking great succour from events that provided them with the opportunity to display their Catholicism and celebrate special feast days in the streets in a carnival atmosphere. "To honour our Lord in the blessed sacrament ... the annual Corpus Christi procession came out into the streets of Port Glasgow and benediction was given at altars erected there in the Coronation Park, in Murrayfield and in the back courts of Fore Street and King Street (the Fenian Alley), while in adjoining tenements and all along the route the families vied with one another in decorating their windows to honour their heavenly king passing by." (anon. 1954:24-25)

We cannot underestimate the significance of this public celebration of the Roman Catholic faith (cf. Appendix Figure 66). Port Glasgow, like many industrial urban towns of this time, was often the scene of inter-religious strife and sectarian violence. Therefore, setting out on the streets to celebrate their religion and honour the blessed sacrament in what might have been seen by some as a triumphant procession, could be judged as a rather antagonistic act. The church, however, claimed at least to enjoy the indulgence of the Protestant community when it professed that, "much respectful and friendly interest was also evinced by the non-Catholic portion of the population" (anon. 1954:24). The church's own account of this benediction procession above alludes to the real reason why

the Corpus Christi feast day was largely untroubled by sectarianism when it refers to the back courts of Fore Street and King Street by its alternative, localised name "Fenian Alley".

> They started in the chapel an they went up Princes Street an' along Church Street an' intae the Alley ... it wis Benediction. An' they didn't go intae the first Alley [entrance] they went right along King Street an' doon by the old library. Oh, there were hundreds o' people there...aye, it wis benediction they had in the Alley, it wisn't a mass ... The place wis all whitened. All the winda sills an' all the closes wis all whitened ... an' the claes poles would all hiv' banners on them an' wan thing an' another, tissue papers. Aye, people in the Alley did that an' took a great pride in it...it wis nearly all Catholics that wis in that Alley n'then...the other wan wis Pagan Alley, a lot o' Catholics in that Alley tae ... well...that wan there wis Fenian Alley, it wis all Catholic, nearly all Catholics that lived in it. An' that other wan would be mixed. It got called Pagan Alley. That's Port people fur ye. That's whit they dae, that's whit they dae. (Ella Wilson SA1998:16)

Here we have bound up in the nomenclature of the streets and back courts of the town evidence of the notion that being Roman Catholic was synonymous with being Irish. If we consider that some of the town's better-read citizens would have been familiar with the history of the Fenian Movement, the synonymity of "Fenian" and "Catholic" harbours a more subtle recognition among some people that Irish Catholicism was subversive.

As we have heard before in the memory of those interviewed, the town centre was a predominantly Catholic area. The "Fenian Alley", which was considerably bigger than "Pagan Alley" situated across the breadth of Church Street, provided the ideal setting for the church's annual Corpus Christi benediction service. The religious homogeneity of the town centre meant that this very visible profession of faith was a harmonious affair. The act of public prayer and veneration of the blessed sacrament, with all its attendant Roman Catholic symbolism and adoration of holy images, conducted in Latin by a number of priests and religious suitably attired in their priestly vestments, projected the image of a

well-established and confident community of Catholics in this Scottish industrial town. "In these processions, the religious societies of the parish, the men's and women's sections of the Sacred Heart Confraternity, the Children of Mary ... the Legion of Mary, the Girls' and Boys' Guilds, the long-established Conference of St. Vincent de Paul, and the schoolchildren, made public profession of their faith before all men. Prominent too was St. John's Prize Brass Band, leading the hymns on the march and at the benediction service." (anon. 1954:24)

At the head of this colourful and loud festival of the Catholic faith was the clergy of St. John's Church, followed by the conference of altar servers. They carried the sacred vessels and the holy scripture prominently displayed for all to see and venerate by genuflecting and blessing oneself as it passed them standing on the pavements. Most impressive of all was the Golden Monstrance gifted to the church by the women of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart. It carried the exposed sacred host to be worshipped by the faithful (cf. Appendix Figure 67). The children towards the head of the procession added to the colour and ceremonial essence of the event. They were the recently enrolled class of communicants who were required to attend in their First Holy Communion costume of white dress and veil for the girls and "Sunday best" for the boys.

This was more than an annual benediction service to mark the beginning of the month dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This was a celebration of the Catholic faith in Port Glasgow. It served to confirm the young of the parish in the ways of the church and introduce them to the more celebratory and visual imagery of church ritual. It did this too for the adult population, but it also served to confirm them in their growing sense of

community and their establishment in Port Glasgow. We must remember that in the inter-war period the Catholics of Port Glasgow were Irish by birth in many cases and Irish in their attitudes, beliefs and cultural ties in almost all other cases. The idea of regulated, formalised and publicly celebrated religious feast days led by the clergy and executed with great pomp and solemnity was still an alien practice to some of the immigrants (cf. Appendix Figure 68). In its very community-orientated method it was a way of harnessing the homogeneity of their religious allegiance which, if left unattended, may not have congealed in as quick or as committed a fashion.

It also served to confirm this community in a very temporal and earthly essential, in their spatial superiority in the centre of the town. Not only was it important for the church and the congregation to affirm their religious and cultural bonds, which at times were stretched by secular allegiances, it was important for the community as a whole to mark through celebration the spatial boundaries that identified and measured the extent of their cultural commonwealth within this very Presbyterian Scottish scene. An annual display of religious devotion that brought their "alien" creed on to the streets also confirmed the non-Catholic community in the Catholic right to practice public worship and establish the basis of a tradition. It became an annual event traditionally practised and cultivated on the back of a Catholic community. But, not all of its members were taken by the idea of displaying their beliefs in so public a fashion.

> Ah wis never enamoured wi' it mind ye. Ah wid be a wee bit affronted goin' on the walk roon'. Ma maw n'them wid be goin' an' ye had tae go wi' the weans wi' ye...but ye couldn't say naw, ye wurn't goin' if ma maw an' Cassie [sister] wis goin'. (Ella Wilson SA1998:16)

Despite her own misgivings about the Corpus Christi procession and open-air

benediction, Ella felt she could not resist the pressure to take part. Even in the 1940s when she was married and had children of her own, family and peer pressure convinced her of the need to attend. Not to do so would have been to desert a tradition her still active mother helped to establish and the rest of her sisters strongly adhered to. More important, she would have left herself open to accusations from the family of depriving her children of their heritage which meant a great deal among the Catholic community of Port Glasgow.

With the onset of council house building schemes and slum-clearance programmes after World War Two, the nature of the town centre population changed gradually to become more non-denominational. Perhaps, Ella felt intimidated in this increasingly mixed-faith setting about taking part in such a demonstrably Catholic procession. But how did the non-Catholic minority in the town centre, and more precisely in the "Fenian Alley", cope with this Roman Catholic carnival in June every year? In Ella's mind it was not exclusively Catholic. Cathie Hagan claims a rather more exact memory of the size of the Protestant population in the Fenian Alley in the 1940s, and it is her recollection that all those living in the Alley took part in the festival.

C.H.: There wis only wan Protestant person in the Alley when we were young.

H.H.: Do you know who it was?

C.H.: Ah can't remember, but Ah know when they had the processions for the Corpus Christi in the Alley, that she always painted her windas and decorated her place along wi' everybody else, whoever she wis Ah can't remember.

H.H.: What would they have done?

C.H.: They whitened all their windas, Ah don't know whether they painted them or whitened them, but they were all snow white an' they all put up flowers an' put oot

> their crucifixes. An' the Alley on the ground roon' aboot all the closes was all whitened, Ah think it wis painted, an' roon' aboot all the edges and they put up a wee platform in the middle o' the Alley an' it wis decorated wi' flowers, jist like an' altar ... but it would be lovely, the Alley wis lovely.
> (Cathie Hagan SA1998:18) (cf. Appendix Figure 69)

It is significant that Cathie Hagan recalls quite clearly that only one Protestant lived in the Fenian Alley in her younger days (late 1930s and 1940s). It is even more illuminating that she equates any decorative work this family may have contributed to the Corpus Christi festival would have been undertaken by the wife of the family. In the mind-set of Cathie and her contemporaries, this task was a female one. What one cannot know is whether this Protestant woman readily participated in the celebration or if she felt obliged under the circumstances to comply with the wishes of the majority. Certainly her fellow working class Protestants living in the Glen, removed from this theatre of Catholicism, would not have been as approving in their disposition towards such public displays of Catholic ritual. Traditional geographical supremacy of specific areas of Port Glasgow by both religions contributed to the homogeneity felt by the inhabitants of these places and provided the perfect strategic conditions for periodic confrontations between the opposing camps.

Chapter Seven

SECTARIANISM AND THE REALM OF THE MIND

7.1 Scottish Sectarianism: a Modern Problem?

In August 1999 the Scottish composer James McMillan gave a paper to the Edinburgh International Festival entitled 'Scotland's Shame'. In it he claimed that Scotland was a land of "sleep-walking bigotry" that tolerated anti-Catholic sentiment in the realms of academia, industry, politics and the media. In other words, he claimed there was institutional discrimination against Scotland's Catholic population.

Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in modern Scotland (ed. Devine 2000) brought together some of Scotland's most imminent scholars and commentators on socio-political and religious experience to explore the evidence for McMillan's allegations. One camp is represented by those of the 'social attitudes' persuasion who consider sectarianism in the minds of modern Scots. Their research is concerned with the "territory of the mind, the heart and the spirit" of sectarianism, that area of Scottish society where prejudice still lives rampant. The other camp consists of social scientists whose aim is to explore the objective experience of Scottish Catholics in relation to the labour markets, housing and the class structure. No consensus between the two camps has been reached. However, this lack of consensus is not attributable to "simple ideological divisions among the contributors"; rather it must to some extent stem from "different personal experience as so many of the issues in the debate come down to subjective judgements" (Devine 2000:261).

Partly, this situation exists because of the lack of statistical information on which to base any opinions about the issue. The social scientist must have statistical tabulation and analyses to make quantifiable judgements, and the information simply is not available yet in the quantity needed. "Big numbers are essential and they are not yet available to answer some of the key outstanding questions." (Devine 2000:262) The lack of statistical evidence, of course, means that the historical picture of the Catholic experience in modern Scotland is incomplete. Peter Lynch re-emphasises this when he asserts that "the main problem with sectarianism in Scotland is that what we know is vastly overshadowed by what we don't ... we have lingering suspicions, stories our parents tell us and lots of speculation" (Lynch 2000:253).

One must respect that the thoughts and opinions of those who hold beliefs are based on the experience of forebears. The suspicions, the tales told by parents and grandparents, and the speculation that undoubtedly exists in Scottish minds concerning religious tensions and the historical, not to mention the ethnic background, to these tensions are very real. By systematically collecting and critically assessing the reminiscences of those who have experienced the religious tensions of the Scotland of a generation and more ago, which can be regarded as incontrovertible, we can provide a basis for further research when the material of social scientific analysis becomes available. At the same time, we are contributing to the body of ethnological information that exists to illuminate the structures and socialisation process behind these views.

Aspinwall considers the historical context for modern Scottish bigotry and contests that even in the tumulteous days of the mid nineteenth century the truth was not cut and

dry in favour of rampant religious bigotry. "To assume that all Protestants were virulently opposed to Catholicism is wide off the mark. Revd Dr Thomas Chalmers, the leading Scottish churchman of his day and later founder of the Free Church, preached to raise funds for Catholic schools. Free Churchmen attended Midnight Mass at Christmas in Carstairs House in 1850. The first Catholic chapel since the Reformation begun in the old Mitchell Street tennis courts in Glasgow was established through Protestant businessmen. The redoubtable Father Theobald Mathew, the Irish temperance apostle, was rapturously welcomed by thousands of Scottish Protestant on his visit in 1842 ... Yes, others were virulent bigots. Reality is complex." (Aspinwall 2000:106)

The nineteenth century turmoil we look to for the embryonic beginnings of religious bigotry is not as easily understood as we would perhaps like to think. In inter-war Port Glasgow issues of religious allegiance and sectarianism are just as complex.

7.2 Billies and Dans: Never the Twain ... ?

Although sectarianism was rife in the Port during the 1930's, the 'Bad Times', it was not always so. Tension and suspicion between groups does not always lead to polarisation and a refusal to mix.

Paddy Collins lived in a largely Protestant area of the Port as a boy, yet his recollection of life there in the 1920s is not of major sectarian divisions on the streets.

> Naw, naw, we all played thegither at night on the street. No' so much [sectarianism] oot in Montgomery Street way, at that time ... jist eftir the war [1914-1918] ... later on comin' intae the late 1920s, there wis more trouble roon aboot that time ... they [Protestants] didnae show it much oot in Montgomery Street, they showed it more doon at the Glen, that's where the Orange Lodge wis, they were all members of the Orange Lodge or the Free Masons or somethin' like

> that ... all Protestant's doon there ... But, there were Catholics doon there tae an they had tae run the gauntlet. (Paddy Collins SA1998:18)

Paddy's account is very illuminating for us. Prior to the 1930s, he experienced relative harmony between the Protestant and Catholic children in Montgomery Street. Significantly, he recalls the trouble beginning after this period at the same time as the effects of the Depression were being felt on the Clyde. He also believes that the real hotbed of sectarianism was at the Glen where the Orange Lodge was. Jim Renfrew's experience as a Protestant living in the Glasgow Road was similar to Paddy's.

> Ah remember wan time we were all standin' at the fit o' Montgomery Street, it wis aboot wan or two in the mornin' ... an' a crowd came up frae the Station Emmet [town centre, Catholic gang] we were all standin' there an' eh, "Aye, you're Catholic an' you're a Protestant", an' we said "Aye, we're all mixed". Ah wis expectin' there wis gonnie be trouble, but naw, they aw jist dispersed an' that wis it. (Jim Renfrew 2001:003)

Like communities in other parts of Scotland where industry had attracted both indigenous and immigrant, mainly Irish, settlers, there was an acute awareness among the inhabitants of the religious and cultural differences that separated the two communities. The Glen developed a Protestant ghetto mentality - its Catholic equivalent was in the town centre - and in times of strife the homogeneity of the place served as a platform for rallying calls to defend themselves against those who might try to usurp their territory and their very culture, Scottish Protestant or Irish Catholic. The Glen and the town centre had their own dynamic that kicked into action whenever there appeared to be danger looming.

As we have already heard, it was at the time when the shipyards were struggling to provide work that the local authorities, churches and the Carnegie Trust started to look

seriously at providing self help entertainment groups and facilities for the unemployed men of the Port. Interestingly, Paddy considered the Montgomery Street situation to be different. The residents in this area were equally as dependent on the shipyards, and according to Paddy the street was largely populated by Protestant families (Paddy Collins SA1998:18). So, why were the Catholics in Montgomery Street or the general Glasgow Road area not experiencing the same intimidating effects as their religious counterparts in the Glen? It would appear that, apart from the fact that the Glen was a bigger homogeneous community, sufficient numbers of Catholic families moved into Montgomery Street prior to that time to make their numbers count.

> It wis roon about that time (1920) that the Catholics started tae come intae Montgomery Street ... these people that were in Montgomery street [Protestants] were leavin' tae go intae the new buildin's at the Glasgow Road ... jist at the end o' the War ... Protestant's got new houses and the people from the town got their old houses and that's how Catholics came intae Montgomery Street ... an', well eh, we were fit tae haud wir own wi' them [strong enough to defend themselves]. Me an' oor Nellie [brother] we could haud wir own wi' them an' the rest o' the Catholic boys, we run mostly thegither, y'know. (Paddy Collins SA1998:18)

Paddy's experience as a teenager in the Glasgow Road/Montgomery Street area of the Port went from being religiously harmonious to tense and fragmented in a short space of time in the early 1930s, so that hanging around in numbers and seeking pleasures away from the town became his way of tackling the growing problem of religious trouble.

But not all the religious tensions and trouble can be attributed to the vagaries of the local economy. There was already an acute awareness of religious divisions based on the allocation of housing, of jobs and job status, and also of education. This served to raise people's awareness of their differences and to give them added importance in hard times. Mistrust and suspicions that have a basis in opposing cultures and belief

structures are integral to one's psyche and are passed on from generation to generation. They do not ebb and flow like a person's attitude to losing out on a job or a house. These disappointments can be rationalised with a plethora of suitable excuses so that the issue of discrimination becomes only one of a number of reasons why something did or did not happen. However, when a philosophy of discrimination and sectarianism is passed on like a genealogical chart from generation to generation, its importance increases. Until the socio-economic and politico-religious setting changes to affect one's beliefs, there rarely appears any reason to change one's opinion.

There is no doubt that sectarian tensions and beliefs were handed down in some families in the manner that Lynch cites above.

> Never went wi' Protestants, male or female. Ma maw didn't allow it! Aw ma mates were Catholics, two or three boys we went aboot wae tae the dancin', aw Catholics. Never went oot wi' a Protestant in ma life. (Cassie Graham SA1998:16)

7.3 Preserving the Faith or Confirming Differences?

> I heard about one woman and the woman was a convert and she was at mass and Father Ryan, God rest him, stopped her and, ye see they knew who went into church and who didn't go, that was one thing they did know and a person that didn't go to church stood out a mile. There was something far wrong with someone that didn't go to mass, y'know what I mean they stood out. And this day he asked her where her husband was and she says, "Oh, he's sitting in the house Father". He says, "Very well". And he went right up to that house and the door was open and he went right in, and what he give that man lying in that bed. I got that verbal truth from a person that was a relative of the family. And he [priest] gave him fits because she was a convert and out at church and he was a born and bred Catholic lying in bed missing mass. Oh no, they had a big say in your life because they knew you, they knew you and they knew all about you and everything like that. (Sarah Hagan SA2001:005)

We have already discussed the role of the priest in shaping the spiritual and religious devotion of the congregation, but the importance they had in governing the everyday lives of the Port's Catholic community are critical to the debate surrounding sectarian divisions in the town. The church was very concerned that the flock would not endanger the security it worked to achieve and the relations it was developing with the indigenous church. Aspinwall's findings in the nineteenth century show the Catholic Church already developing links with Church of Scotland ministers and prominent Protestants. If this ground was not to be ceded then Catholics in the early twentieth century must not be allowed to relax their guard or provide any excuse for the accusative Protestant finger to point at their lack of devotion. Also, there was the need for the church itself to remain vigilant that Catholics were not becoming complacent about the need to attend church and partake of the sacraments. By maintaining strict adherence to the duties required of Catholics in relation to their faith, the priest was confident of keeping them close to the teachings of the church and removed from the temptations of secular society. No opportunity was lost to reinforce this strategy, and where young Catholics gathered the priest was not far away.

> Know whit the priest used tae dae? He used tae come intae the dancin' an' say the rosary ... an aw the Protestants were pit intae the back kitchen till it wis done ... Mind they used tae have dancin' in the wee school, wee St John's School an' the priest used tae come in ... an' Ah remember Joe Nugent's mother, she wis the caretaker, saying "She's [Nan] no' supposed tae be in here." ... Ah got took in by that Father, whoever his name wis, intae a wee office. Ah says, "Naw, Ah'm no' a Catholic" he say, "Then what are you doing here?" Ah says, "Ah've got mates here". He didn't bother me after that 'cause Ah wis in wae ma mates. ... Oh there wis tension, we didn't bother but. (Nan McLean SA2001:006)

The drive to save children and teenagers from the influences of the opposing faith were not only pursued by the priests and other clergy; parents also kept a vigilant eye on their children's movements, especially when it came to dancing and socialising. It was one thing to know and make friends with those of another religion, but to frequent the clubs and dance halls supporting their aims was considered a step too far and all manner of coercion was used to prevent the step being made, including threats of bewitchment on those who flaunted the rules.

> Ah used tae go home an ma faither wid say, "Ah hope you wernie at that bastardin' Masonic Hall?" We didn't worry aboot that, but wans wid say "See if ye walk under that sign ... something will happen tae ye, y'know , the Masonic sign, the lamp above the door. Can't mind whit it wis that wis supposed tae happen, but it wisnae good. (Jessie Rorrison 2001:006)

If threats from concerned fathers and warnings of evil repercussions to those who failed to protect themselves from religious imagery and the wizardry of the Masonic Lodge did not work, then there was no option but to physically police the movements of irresponsible offspring.

> We used tae go intae the Mill an' bum her faither for the money tae go tae the dancin' in the Hibs Hall, but she wis a Protestant, so she wisn't allowed near the Hibs Hall. So, she would go in and get the money and then we'd hive tae walk aw the fuckin' way in the road intae the toon an' up Barr's Brae, up over Bouverie, an' Ah hid tae go doon then an see if the Mill gate wis shut, an' then me an her wid run like hell tae get intae the Hibs. (Jessie Rorrison SA2001:006)

Sometimes this policing could mean putting one's own personal safety on the line.

> Min' wan time, ma brother wis in the army, oor Tommy, an' he came home this time an' ma mother says, "She'll be at the dancin" ... Course, me an May Tosh and Mary Cush an' that, were at the dancin' in the Hibs, an' Mary says "Nan, there your Tommy at the door." Ah seen him in the fuckin' army uniform, the dress uniform, navy blue and red and Ah says, "Oh for Christ sake May, c'mon. We run like hell intae the toilet. We were all in the toilet an Ah says "Keek oot an' see if he's still there". Ah mean, whit like wis it, standin' wi' a buckin' army uniform on

> in the Hibs Hall an' everybody lookin' at him as much tae say, "Whit the hell you daen in here wi' a fuckin' army uniform on". An' he wis in tae take me oot! (Nan McLean 2001:006)

Escaping the wrath of concerned parents and siblings as well as the pious interventions of the priest was not the only feat of trickery that the youngster had to perform if unrestricted dancing was to be had. The priest, in his efforts to maintain devotion to duty among the pleasure-seeking members of his flock, would resort to curtailing the time available to them for dancing and socialising by some rather drastic means. Only by good fortune and quick thinking would one be able to escape the long arm of the divine when the church was celebrating special feasts and holy periods in the liturgical calendar.

> May devotions or October devotions, right, an' Ah remember wan night, Tommy Law's wife [Mary Bunting] run aboot wi' us an' wans used tae think that we looked that like wan another ... but anyway, Father O'Sullivan used tae come up an' he shut the door in the Hibs an' he picked oot everybody that he wanted tae go tae chapel, go tae devotions, right. So, this night they went, "There's Father O'Sullivan" We went, "Oh, for fucks sake" ... so, we dived intae the toilet. Mary Buntin' wis standin' at the mirror ... Ah wis in the toilet cubicle wi' the door shut, there wis aboot ten o' us in there. Ah heard Father O'Sullivan say tae her [Mary Bunting], "What about you [for devotions]?" She went, "Naw, Ah'm Saint Mungo's parish Father." "Oh, that's alright then", so we thought he wis awa an' we came oot, he gotta haud o' May Coyle and Jane O'Connor and then he went tae grab me an' he says, "Oh no, you're out of Saint Mungo's Chapel." Ah went, "Aye Father" an Ah walked awae. (Jessie Rorrison 2001:006)

Irish priests had an historical baggage that made them wary of the institutions and culture of the Protestant British and cautious about relationships their flock might strike up with ordinary Protestants. The brief history of the nineteenth century Catholic revival in Scotland was littered with concerns about proselytising Presbyterian ministers and community leaders. Therefore, the drive to make sure the Catholics of Port Glasgow

remained free from Protestant infiltration was paramount in their minds. There was a fine line to be trod between maintaining devotion to faith and protecting one's flock against Protestant values. The reinforcement of Catholic values and culture may have been a positive drive to emphasis good Catholic values, but hauling Catholics out of dances to attend devotions or stopping dances and ordering Protestants into the dancehall kitchen whilst the Catholics say the rosary are more likely to reinforce differences than encourage respects between faiths. Some of those priests who were sent to the Port were remembered for their very partisan approach to the plight of their flock.

> A priest has got tae say an office every mornin', a part o' his bible or his prayer book ... he's got a certain part he's got tae read every day in the week ... an' they go somewhere quiet and read this ... this father Heron used tae go up tae Bouverie an' walk up'n doon that park readin' his office ... it wis a Protestant quarter at that time. ... Ah suppose it did annoy them. It *did* annoy them, but he didn't worry about it y'know, 'cause there wis a quite a lot o' Catholics in Bouverie an' they were gled tae see him comin' up. (Paddy Collins SA1998:17)

Those who remember Father Heron recall his fiery sermons and his devotion to his congregation. He brought zeal to the parish during his short stay (1929-1930), and, as Paddy Collins points out above, he could be of a particularly partisan nature. In the eyes of some of those who remember him, his removal from St John's parish so soon after his arrival was in order to protect him from his tendentious nature in a very volatile situation. There must also have been a major concern at a hierarchical level about a priest who was prone to inflammatory acts and who might cause the Protestant church to point to him as the source of the sectarian problem. Nevertheless, Father Heron was popular figure among the parishioners.

> Father Heron, he wis a ... well, he wis nice wi' the people, but when he got on that pulpit, hellfire, y'know. He wis great right enough ... They took him back tae

> Ireland for his own safety y'know. He wis such a wild man aboot the religion in this town. He used tae go up tae Bouverie Park, Bouverie wis a bitter place at that time, an' he wid sit on wan o' they seats up there and read his office ... and he wis threatened a whole lot o' times and that's how they took him back tae Ireland ... when he left they had bonfires roon the quay for the Irish boat comin' doon the Clyde. The people loved him. (Bessie O'Neill 2001:012)

However, ordinary Catholics were capable of demonstrating their cultural allegiance on important days of the year and by doing so underlined the more strategic methods of the parish priest. Special days in the Irish Catholic calendar were celebrated in a way that left their Protestant counterparts in no doubt about where their allegiance lay and marked them as different from the majority culture in the Port.

> See at that time ye worked Christmas Day an' the Catholics took Christmas day aff, others couldn't afford tae take the day aff and they had tae work it, but a lot o' Catholics took that day aff and the Protestants wouldn't ... they worked that day. Good Friday wis another day the Catholics took aff work ... another day some o' them took aff wis the Easter Rising. They took that day aff and they wore an Irish lilly tae commemorate the Easter Rising. Some people took Saint Patrick's Day aff tae ... Saint Patrick's Day and Christmas Day people wid go tae mass first, but all the other days, the Easter Rising innat, there wisnie a [special] mass that day ... just an excuse for a drink ... people would go oot an' get drunk and march along the streets singin' Irish songs. (Paddy Collins SA1998:18)

If we consider the true meaning of the word sectarian i.e. 'strongly imbued with the characteristics of a sect especially if bigoted' (Chambers1988:900), then we can begin to see from the evidence above that it was already a recognisable phenomenon in the lives of many Catholics in 1930s Port Glasgow. But not everyone found this religious polarisation a stifling affair. In fact, for some it was positive godsend to business.

> Ah finished up at eighteen with my own band, four of us joined together, The Rythmic Rascals, we played all the halls about here ... church halls, Masonic halls, Knights of Saint Columba, Hibernian hall, Labour hall ... Old Port Glasgow Town Hall always had an Orange dance and they always had a Hibernian dance ... Ah've played the Old Town Hall for the Orangemen and for the Hibernians an ye're playing all the party tunes and everything else ... Ah wis a Protetsant and we had

> two Protestants and two Catholics and Ah'll tell ye, when we played for the Orangemen they [Catholics] knew better orange tunes than whit Ah did, that's a fact ... always trouble but at these dances. If the Rangers got beat there wis a battle in the middle o' the floor and if the Celtic got beat there wis always a battle in the middle of the floor. (James Pettigrew 2001:009)

7.4 The Organised Divide

Apart from the fact that many Catholics saw the religious division between themselves and their Protestant counterparts clearly enough, there were concrete symbols of this religious and cultural division too. If Catholics were suspicious of the Glen as the citadel of Orangeism and of the more mysterious Masonic lodges with their decorative door lamps that transformed Catholics if they dallied too long under its illumination, then they were not against the notion of combination in celebration or defence of their own cultural and religious beliefs.

> There wis the Irish National Foresters branches here at that time and then ye had the Knights [of Saint Columba], then ye had members of the Sacred Heart and Saint Vincent de Paul Society and then ye had the Ancient Order of Hibernians. (Paddy Collins SA1998:18)

The parish priest was important to these organisations because he afforded them the respectability and official sanction they would have found difficult to survive without. He was there to bless the opening of new buildings and open meetings with prayers for the organisation, its supporters, the church and Ireland and he officiated at meetings and dinners throughout the year. These organisations were also a useful source of much

needed funding for church repairs and for all manner of religious issues[1]. The Ancient Order of Hibernian's and the other Irish Catholic organisations celebrated the annual feast day of Saint Patrick and the annual commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising and provided a focal point for those who wished to express their support. Rallies and processions were not uncommon and they were every bit as colourful if not as large and traditional as those of their Orange counterparts.

Of course, the Orange Order's annual demonstration on 12 July, commemorating the victorious Protestant forces of Prince William of Orange over the Catholic King James VI at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, was a major source of irritation to the town's Catholic population as the procession followed a route through the town centre which they regarded as their territory.

> An' then, when they marched on the twelfth of July when they would come up by the [church] ... they threw the very bottles at oor Chapel, they were real bitter ... oh aye, it wis a big parade. They wid maybe come from different parts an' they would aw march ... sometimes oot the length o' Caledonia Street [Glasgow Road] an' back in the road again. They'd put a wreath on that monument at Caledonia Street [War memorial] an' they'd put wan on at the town [cenotaph], then they wid march up tae the station an' get a special train, the train wid be in an' they'd aw get on the train an' away they'd go tae wherever they wid be going for their march. An' then when they came back at night time it wis as bad again. The Catholics wis oot waitin' on them an' the minute they came oot the [station], they had tae come doon Princes Street or doon John Wood Street, they got murdered. Aye it wis bedlam. (Cassie Kane SA1997:24)

The real flashpoints came when the opposing forces met on each other's territory, which was inevitable given that the town was the commercial and political centre and the Glen was the industrial hub of the place. On the inevitable occasions when someone

[1] The AOH in Port Glasgow to this day financially supports at least one young student a year on his journey through the Vatican's education system for priests and any local student priests are favoured with special assistance.

had to journey into the opposing camp for work or any other purpose, they had reason to fear for their safety.

> Very, very bitter, Ah mean everybody wis very bitter ... the Port was worse, that's honest tae God for religion, as far as religion was concerned the Port was very, very bitter ... when the Catholics would go doon by the Glen, the Glen boys would kill them and then when the Glen boys would come up intae the toon tae sign the burro ... they either got the League Hall boys tae deal wi' or the Cross boys or the Station Emmet boys, they had tae go past wan o' them and they'd get murdered then ... an' all ye woulda heard wis Black Bert and Alec Foster ... every Friday they came up tae sign the burroo and all ye woulda heard wis Black Bert and Alec Foster got near kill't the day at the burro, every week the two of them got a hammerin'. An' then they started an' they shifted it tae Greenock. They decided they would go tae Greenock tae sign the burroo and when they went doon there the Manse Lane boys in Greenock met them an' near kill't them n'all. The Port wans wis really [more] bitter than the Greenock wans. (Cassie Kane SA1997:24)

7.5 A Catholic in the Glen

Such serious violence being committed against the Protestants of the Glen area was often reciprocated when the Glen boys discovered Catholics making a journey through their territory, which, of course, was not uncommon given that many of the shipyards were on the shorefront at the Glen. Yet, these areas were not mutually exclusive. Protestants lived in the town centre and Catholic families settled in the Glen. But even those who were not subject to violence felt that to stand out as a Catholic in the Glen area in the 1930s was to leave yourself and your family open to danger. Indeed, some felt this was too dangerous a risk to take.

> Ah was brought up at the Glen and my grandparents stayed at the Glen. Ah was brought up above Morrison's pub ... but ye couldn't walk up an' doon there. Catholics couldn't walk doon the Glen themselves ... you had tae go in a crowd for protection. That's how my uncles moved away from the Glen because the Billy Boys stood below them ... they stood on the corner down below their house and

> they [uncles] moved to George Street because of it ... (Harry Mulholland SA2001:002)

Nevertheless, whilst some felt the need to move away from the Glen, others were committed to staying there despite the difficulties it posed. Margaret O'Donoghue chose to live there with her husband Joe after they married, and Sarah Hagan also moved there after her wedding; she was offered a house, the likes of which she would have waited for years in the town centre. Her mother's concerns about her living there, especially as the Glen Orangemen prepared for the marching season in the summer months, led her to offer Sarah and her family shelter until things would die down.

> They were putting the bunting up and down and crosswise on the street and I went over at tea time to put my mother on the bus home and she turns and she says to me, "Oh Sarah, why don't you come up until its all over." I said, "No mother, it'll be quite alright, I don't bother anyone and anyway there's more [Catholics] than me lives down the street, so don't you worry about it." (Sarah Hagan SA2001:004)

Nevertheless, Sarah did harbour some concerns about the safety of the Glen area during the marching season. She felt a great sense of isolation far from the town centre and closer to Greenock, being removed from family and friends and in the midst of the very colourful, noisy and often intimidating Orange celebrations that seemed to fill the streets and homes of all those who lived in the Glen area.

> Argyle Street and down that area was like a miniature Belfast ... People up the town knew nothing about it. It was terrible. The Orange Lodge was down there on Mary Street and they paraded up and down the street. It was a miniature Belfast ... there were some awfully good Protestants who didn't want to be bothered either, but you had the [bad] element there ... they practiced up and down the streets and the children got it when they would be coming home from school and they'd be cursing the Pope. It was bad, real bad ... it was very difficult to live ... you had a lot to put up with. I used to go out on a Saturday morning very early and get my messages [shopping] before their parades and practicing started because they

> would be up and down this road with their banners and sashes ... and there was lot of venom in it, it wasn't just a band ... Inchgreen Street and the Boundary to Argyle Street was a hotbed of Orangeism ... they would paint the very windowsills royal blue and orange whether you were a Catholic or not. It was a rotten area to live in ... you were very aware of the area you lived in and all about it, it was simple as that. (Sarah Hagan SA2001:004)

7.6 Fighting for the Faith

If a focus was a needed for the violence that periodically flared up between the opposing religious forces of the Port, then the annual Orange parade was a perfect provider. Those who were able to disrupt an Orange march went down in the annals of the Irish Catholic community with heroic status. Among the Catholic families of the Port, an ancestor who managed to gain fame for this type of rearguard action is revered like a patriot, striking a blow for the cause. One's street credibility is enhanced through an ancestor who acted bravely to protect the family.

> She couldn't read nor write, but she wis intelligent. But, by God wis she bitter, oh God gracious ... I have never ever come across any wuman as bitter as whit ma grannie wis, an' she could fight like a man, battered them left right an' centre ... When the Orangemen would come, it seems she started ... Ah don't know, now Ah'm only telling' ye whit John Hughes [uncle] tellt me ... The Orangemen came tae walk and the Dockhead, that's where the dock wis, that wis the Dockhead, well it wis all a Catholic crowd that stayed there. An' the Orangemen came doon John Wood Street comin' from Glasga and all these places. An' she wis standin' an' she had her basket an' she went intae the middle o' them an' battered hell oot them all an' they all landed in the dock, some o' them got threw intae the dock.
> (Cassie Kane SA1997:22)

Yet, Cassie's grannie knew good business when she saw it, and the livelihood she made from selling produce from the allotment she worked afforded her a particular

source of income that could easily have been blighted by her obvious hatred for the Orange Order. But she never allowed this hatred to destroy a good business prospect.

> She had potatoes and all that and vegetables and then she had a big garden of flowers ... she just took them over tae the hoose, we just used them in the hoose. But, she had the best orange lilies in the Port and the Orangemen used tae come the night before they would walk and ask her if she would sell them the orange lilies, there ye are, that's true. But, aye, she wis bitter. Suppose at the same time as she wis sellin' them the lilies she wis sayin' her prayers tae them.
> (Cassie Kane SA1997:23)

Not everyone's family tree can list a 'hero to the cause' like Cassie Kane's grannie, but a number of those interviewed could easily recall similar instances from the inter-war period where a well-known local Catholic renegade would attempt to stop the local orange parades by some rather drastic measure.

> When they [Orangemen] passed through the town they [Catholics] were flinging things at them, the wans in the Alley an' other places here and there. Wan fella, Tommy Foy Ah think ye called him, run oot, Ah think they were marchin' by George Street, and trailed the drum aff the drum major an' run down the quay wi' it an' flung it in the waater, they were gonnie kill him. Aye, threw the drum intae the Clyde. (Cassie Graham SA1998:16)

Bessie O'Neill recalls the same event with a slight variation and her friend Emi Donnelly recollects a similar act being executed by a member of her family.

> Ye know Maida Foy, well her uncle jumped through the drum on the twelfth of July when the Orangemen were marchin' ... Aye, an ma oul' grannie Donnelly, she did that years ago when she wis a young wuman, pit her fit through the big drum. There used tae be murder at the Orange walks. (Bessie O'Neil & Emi Donnelly SA2001:012)

It would appear that the Orange parades were the focus of many Catholic attacks in the Port at this time. Tensions were undoubtedly high with unemployment rife and territorial awareness having been enhanced by events. But, significantly, these attacks were not the

preserve of the men. Emi's grannnie was not the only female to vent her fury at the Orangemen.

> Min' wan day there wis a parade, the Orangemen came along East Shaw Street an' Ah mean, there wis aw religions living in East Shaw Street, an' where Ah wis standin' it wis a corner an' Ah saw this wuman running oot this close an right intae the middle o' them, she threw herself right intae the middle o' them, "Ya Fenian so n'so." they were callin' her, They called her for everythin' (Letti Lyons 2001:008)

On occasion, this annual discipline of attempting to disrupt the Orange parade erupted into violence. As mentioned above, the conditions for tense relations in the Port between those who stood out as different because the lived in a different homogeneous area, supported different causes, attended a different church, were in place. It required only a spark to set things off. Unemployment was a catalyst in this respect, and this was not lost on those who witnessed the tensions that existed.

> At the time of the religious riots in the town they used tae say that they [rioters] were encouraged [by employers] because if they were doing that they wurnie fightin' for wages or they wurnie fightin' for conditions, they were occupied fightin' each other ... fighting for their faith. There was the "Siege of Chapel Lane" and I don't think that was religious, Ah think it was unemployment that caused that. The local police wouldn't go up Chapel Lane, but the Police came from Dumbarton and the local polis sent them up the lane. As soon as they came up all this stuff came out the windas, chanties and all that. (Harry Mulholland SA2001:002)

Whatever the motivation for this particular riot, it is remembered in siege terms and is recalled as a great moment in Port Glasgow's Catholic history when one of their territories held off an assault by the local police and establishment. There is an understanding that employment is at the heart of the problem, but given that many Catholics felt that their employment chances were restricted anyway because of their religion, the tension being released in these outbreaks of violence was perhaps indicative

of a more fundamental sense of injustice than that brought on by the failing economy in the 1930s.

> There wis a runnin' battle here at wan time. We had a polisman an' we called him Wullie Buck, big strappin' man, big heilan man, y'know, an' they were up an' doon Chapel Lane ... a runnin' battle, an' they even went up ontae the roofs tae throw the very slates doon at the polis, the Catholics did. It wis terrible. (Cassie Kane SA1997:24)

Whilst we cannot say that the violence that took place in Chapel Lane or another part of the town in this period constitutes a siege of the Catholic 'territories', we can say that these recounted reminiscences certainly depict a siege mentality in existence among some of those experiencing the violence. The violence of the sectarian turf wars that took place was no less imaged than the siege mentality was. This propensity towards acts of sectarian violence and the reality of the siege mentality saw Catholics turn out at all hours of the day and night to protect their property and institutions from any and all perceived threats of Protestant retaliation for the many beatings they were subjected to on their visits to the town centre. Any suggestion of stirrings in the Glen that might lead to attacks on Catholic boys or on Catholic property brought swift defence tactics to bear.

> Ah wis just newly married at the time [1931] ... an' wan night aboot three o' clock in the morning there wis a whole rampage going on. Ah looked oot the winda and ... there were hundreds o' men marchin' and shoutin' and bawlin', "They're [Glen boys] gonnie burn down Murrayshore", and all the fancy talk that wis going on. It was a false alarm, but the men came oot at that time in the mornin' and marched down tae Murrayshore, the league [of the Cross] boys an' that. Then the polis came and the mounted wans tae. (Cassie Graham SA1998:16)

Murray shore had only recently been established at this time and the guess is that the rowing team that they set up with their new boats, courtesy of the priests, the AOH and

the local Irish Catholic doctor, was competing rather too vigorously with the long established Davie Shore Club at the Glen.

> There was a big scare, it was bad. James [husband] was one of them and his brother was one of them too. "Come out boys, come out boys". They were running. "They're going to burn the shore". James was among those ones at George Street and they all run down to Murrayshore, every boy that was in the area and every man, run down to Murrayshore and the police were coming from Dumbarton and everywhere for reinforcements. Father MacIntyre went into Murrayshore and appealed to the men to line up, take no action of any kind and he would deal with the police, but there was to be no fighting and nothing out of turn. Father MacIntyre went out and spoke to the police, they were all down at the Plazza [cinema], told them that the men would come out and that he would guarantee that they would walk home and there would be no trouble. Whenever they came out ... the police chased them. They were running everywhere. James run up Balfour Street, the women were opening their doors and taking them in. He spent the night in a woman's house in Balfour Street and he didn't know whose house it was. And apparently, Mrs Bonnar's house in Chapel Lane, she had a single end and she had an under-floor place with a trap door. She took them in and put them under the floorboards. They had to run for their lives or they would have been arrested and the police ran at them with batons. (Sarah Hagan SA2001:005)

Like other Catholic woman, Mrs Bonnar made a conscious decision to assist those who from time to time would be involved in such actions. There was almost certainly a war of attrition going on between those involved in supporting the actions of the Catholic men and those representing the forces of law and order.

> There used tae be riots here in the thirties ... the Billy Boys were feart tae come up an' sign the burroo. They [Catholic gangs] wouldn't let them. Many's a time ma mammy had them all [Catholic boys] in this house tae, in the coal bunker and everywhere. Ah remember wan mornin' they were all goin' awae, she used tae go doon tae Mackay the bakers for the rolls, and Big Adam Cockburn [policemen] says tae her, "You're awful early this morning Lizzie ... for your biscuits and rolls". 'Cause they knew your business then. She says, "Och, Ah jist felt like it, Ah've been up quite a lot during the night." She had a whole house full o' them men, feedin' them and gie'n them their tea before they left. Eftir they all went awae, an' she thought they were all awae, the bunker lid got lifted and somebody came creepin' oot ... aw hiddin' from the polis, they'd been rioting that night ... didn't gie a damn ma mother, ne'er she did. Adam Cockburn clipped her wings right enough 'cause he knew it wis too early. (Emi Donnelly SA2001:012)

7.7 Inter-Religious Relations

> It wis important that ye were in the wan religion and the other religion wis aw wrang, that wis the important thing. (Letti Lyons SA2001:008)

One can imagine the difficulties a couple of Catholic and Protestant backgrounds might experience if they fell in love and decided to marry in the Port at this time. It is not difficult to consider the hardships faced by those embarking on inter-religious relations in the 1930s. Nevertheless, these relationships did occur and those involved in them to deal with the consequences. It was not just families with strong connections to the Orange Order or the Ancient Order of Hibernians that had staunch views on this matter. Ordinary families who considered themselves moderate and normal found the prospect of a member of the opposing religious camp in their family network a danger to their respectability. This, too, is understandable given that territory was considered in religious terms, even if these territories were not religiously exclusive.

> We wurnie bigoted, the way we were brought up, an' neither wis ma man's crowd because Ah wis a Protestant an' ma man wis Catholic. But, eh, Ah got a lot o' stick fur merryin' him, but Ah couldnie have got a better man ... if Ah'd tried. We brought oor own kids up that way tae ... Aye, the family tried tae send me away tae England to get awae from him, but Ah widnae go ... it wis murder. Ah'd a sister there they wanted tae send me tae ... Ah wis nearly seventeen, but that's whit Ah wanted and that's whit Ah got an' Ah had a happy life. (Letti Lyons 2001:008)

Not everyone in this situation was as fortunate as Letti, whose family were not associated with the Orange Order and were able to relent after a while and accepted her decision. For others, the family division caused by their inter-religious relationship lasted a lot longer and ran very deep indeed. The prospect of an Irish Catholic marrying into a family where the father was a senior member of the local Masonic lodge was

nothing short of a catastrophe for him. The pressure this put on a family whose socio-political and religious network was founded upon a fundamental adherence to Scottish Protestant values and the dominance of this culture in the local as well as the national economic context was immense. One's reputation in the local Lodge would never be the same again. This is the situation the Renfrew family had to face when their son announced his intention to marry his Catholic girlfriend.

> Well in them days there wis nae television only a wee wireless an' there wis a station there, Luxemburg, it wis a great station an' Ah used tae listen tae it and ma father used tae shout, "Turn that bloody thing doon." So anyway, this Sunday night he shouts, "Turn that bloody thing ...", so Ah turned it down. Ah says, "Well, ye've told me tae turn it down, Ah've got somethin' Ah want tae tell you." Then ma mother and him sat up in bed "What is it?" Ah says, "Ah'm getting' married." He says right away, "Have ye got tae get married?" Ah says, "Naw, Ah've not got tae get married." He says, "Whit's happenin', where are ye getting' married, when are ye getting' married?" Ah says, "Ah'm getting' married in the [Catholic] Chapel". He says tae me, "You'll never leave this house tae go tae any Chapel tae get married." Ah knew that, Ah knew he'd say that. So, he put me out the house, told me to go. So, the week before Ah got married, that Sunday night, Ah just packed a bag and ... ach ... it wis awfie difficult. Ah stayed in the wife's mother's for a week before Ah got married. Ma father wouldn't talk tae me, but ma mother would say, before Ah left the house "Ah hope you know what ye're doing." Ah says, "Oh, Ah know whit Ah'm doing alright. Ah love her, Ah love the girl ... if Ah marry a girl in ma own religion Ah might no' be happy, Ah love this girl an she's a nice lookin' girl." But ma father, he didn't see it that way, wouldn't speak tae me. Well, he had tae hold up his position in the Mason's.
> (Jim Renfrew SA2001:003)

Jim's family shunned him and his wife for almost 2 years. They only made contact again when his mother and his sisters decided they wanted to see Jim's newly born daughter. After this initial meeting, things got slightly better between them, but his father remained resolutely opposed to the marriage and refused conciliation. In Jim's opinion his father's position in the Masons made it impossible for him to sanction his

son's marriage to a Catholic which was made worse by the fact that Jim got married by Catholic rite.

Bigotry of this kind was not, of course, unique to the Protestants of Port Glasgow. Catholics were equally suspicious and resentful of family members being 'lost' to the Protestant faith. If the individual wasn't 'lost', then their soul was, and this was a matter for serious concern. However, it could meet with apathy from the church officials if there really was little to be done to avoid it.

> Father Donnelly used tae come up regular tae oor house, 'cause John [husband] used tae put a line on for him an' John says tae him, "Listen, see that young brother o' mine, he's headin' for turning his coat [becoming Protestant] ... would ye have a word wi' him?" The priest says, "If he wants tae go tae hell, let him." So anyway, he was getting married tae her and that night John got ready as usual. Ah thought he wis goin' tae the Murrayshore and the next day somebody wis telling me that wan o' James O'Neill's brothers wis doon at the Congregational Church ... standin' outside gonnie stop him [James] from getting' intae the church ... it turned oot tae be oor John. It wis a Friday night and he went doon tae the Congregational Church and he wis standin' among wans that were waitin' tae see them [bridal party] go in, tae cause trouble and stop them. Who came along but Mrs English and Mrs Sweeney on their way tae Chapel, and they saw John and they went over and they said tae him, "For God's sake son don't cause a scene ... c'mon awae son and don't worry about it, let him ruin his life if that's the way he wants tae dae it." And they two wumen took John away. (Bessie O'Neil SA2001:012)

Sectarian clashes were not the exclusive property of the male population of Port Glasgow. As we have seen, the Catholic women were equally capable of attacking the Orange parade, but neither was the population of the Port so alienated that Catholic and Protestant never met on common ground. Catholics and Protestants did meet and fall in love and marry despite the very painful and divisive experience for the families involved. The areas which were marked as the traditional territory of one group or another were not exclusively so. Cassie Graham recalls that relations between the Catholic and Protestant

women in the tenements in George Street were generally friendly, but occasionally, under the strain of poor living conditions and the consequent worth attached to household items, emotions boiled over to reveal a latent sectarianism. Cassie remembers one episode that led to an outburst of religious antagonism and served to confirm those involved in their views about where their community allegiance lay.

> Aye, there wis three closes, two big wide wans A and B, and C wis on the other side o' the street, four storey, and C wis mostly Protestant. Oh, many a good barny there were through religion. Bloody laugh. When Ah wis a wee lassie, an Ethel Gray lived up the stairs, cheeky oul' pig. An' she'd wan o' they expandin' cradles. Ma maw wis gonnie hiv wan o' the weans an' she got a len' o' this crib aff Ethel, an' Ah sat on the end o' it an' broke it. Ah wis gonnie get ma brains knocked in. But, she sent doon for this cradle an' ma maw told her that Ah broke the cradle an' she went mad about it. Quite entitled tae. But, it must've got under ma maw's skin an' she says, "Ach awae tae hell ya orange pig ye." "Aye", she [Ethel] says, "Ah'm Orange an' ma brother rode the white horse through the streets o' the Port." An' ma maw says, "Aye, an' he's ridin' it through hell noo." Never seen a battle like it, they were gonnie kill wan another. (Cassie Graham SA1998:16)

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has explored some fundamental aspects of the Roman Catholic female experience in Port Glasgow between the Wars. It has not been the aim of this thesis to determine the place of women in the industrial society of inter-war Port Glasgow or define the essence of community identity for all its inhabitants. I have given an historical outline of the town's development in order to provide the reader with a sense of the town's social and economic development in order to establish a referential framework for the following chapters. The subsequent focus has been specifically on issues surrounding entertainment, courtship, marriage, home-making, religious practice and beliefs in the supernatural and sectarianism. Oral testimony from a selection of individuals who remember the period and others who, whilst not experiencing it as adults, have childhood memories of that time and recollections of their family and their parents' experiences, has been employed to highlight these issues.

The work has woven the memories and recollections of the participants in this oral history into a tapestry of personal and collective experience. It has incorporated the male experience, and parallels have been drawn with other research findings from oral and documented sources. The result is a record of what it was like for Roman Catholic females and males in the working class households of 1930s Port Glasgow. Importantly, as well as a historical document, the thesis shows how history is remembered and recalled by the respondents.

The thesis has sometimes portrayed a slightly wholesome scene of life, but this is inevitable. The people interviewed obviously experienced difficulties in sustaining

their family through the many hardships that faced them. However, these people are survivors and are passionately proud of their achievements in raising "battalions" of children, as Cassie Graham fondly described the large complement of children typical to town centre families, in very difficult social and economic circumstances. They were proud of their ability to survive, whilst accommodating sacrifice after sacrifice to provide the bare essentials and fundamentals of life for their children and their home. However, they never describe their lives romantically.

Another of Cassie's maxims, "poverty brings people together", sums up what many women experienced both in relation to the harsh realities and the positive encounters. The fellowship, neighbourliness, enjoyment and personal fulfilments they remember were inextricably linked to the extremely difficult domestic context in which their lives were set. Perhaps the important factor is that, while their fellowship and neighbourliness, although remembered through acts of kindness and helpfulness, is recounted almost as a philosophy of life, a limitless value. On the other hand, the poverty they endured, and which led to their camaraderie, is told in relation to a catalogue of events, sacrifices and specific burdens and calamities they had to suffer. The philosophy of neighbourliness is more enduring and more readily accessible in the minds of those interviewed. Whilst survivors never forget the horrors and difficulties they experienced, they are always more inclined to recollect the thing which they believe made them a survivor. Those interviewed naturally set their hardships against the powerful spirit of camaraderie that sustained them.

We can point to paradoxes in this community. Why, for example, was it not unusual for families to produce "battalions" of children, when all the other factors in the lives of working class Portonians pointed to additional difficulties to be faced as

a result of fertile marriages? A common theme of the recordings has been the size of ordinary families. It was the accepted norm, according to those interviewed, to have large families. There are nineteenth century antecedents to this norm that prevailed in industrial working class centres until the post World War II period, and it was based on an economic premise that saw children as potential wage earners and contributors to the household purse. Yet, inter-war working class homes were not ideal accommodation for a large number of people.

We have heard in some detail about the crammed and unhealthy living conditions many of the informants endured. Cassie Kane recalls how the Montgomery Street family home of her childhood was overcrowded to the extent that the sleeping arrangements necessary to accommodate everyone in the household meant that no space was without some form of bed. Not only was it common for working class families to have four children at the very minimum, there was often, even in single end accommodation, lodgers to cater for. In room and kitchen dwellings, we have heard, how the "good room" regularly became a home for young married couples for long periods of time before they eventually found a home of their own. The potential extra space a 'good room' offered a working class family was often surrendered to the financial domestic strategy of taking in lodgers. For the tenant family, these circumstances frequently led to children and adults sharing beds, with distressing consequences. Josie Watson witnessed the final moments of her mother's life in the set-in bed. It was also customary for young children to sleep together, four or more to a bed, but this did not necessarily end in childhood. Cassie Graham slept in this fashion until she was almost twenty years of age.

Small and irregular incomes and parish handouts were a common way of life in the crammed closes of Port Glasgow. Understandably, poor health was a common feature. Mothers shared food and bedding generously with their children and their husbands as the breadwinner; but children who were lucky enough to survive the poor conditions were often blighted with rickets and respiratory diseases. The unlucky ones died in infancy. Seven of the women interviewed lost young children to the miasmic surroundings they were forced to live in and their attitude to family size adopted the understanding that as some children would die in infancy there was a need to have more. Cassie Graham, when asked how she thought parents coped with the apparent inevitability of children dying replied that they had no time to consider how they would cope, as there were always other children to take their place. In her words, there was "a wean every year" to contend with. Cassie herself lost a child in infancy and suffered the loss of two sisters aged seventeen and ten to tuberculosis. She was also the neighbour of a woman in George Street who had twenty-two of a family, of whom only two lived to adulthood.

Although my respondents were reluctant to divulge their experiences and thoughts on inter-war attitudes to contraception in Port Glasgow, they were not oblivious to birth control. Ella Wilson pointedly questioned why it seemed to be imperative for working class Catholics to have large families, whilst the social élites seemed, in her opinion, to be content with their complement of two children. She was unwilling to speculate on the forces she thought might be at play that allowed the Catholic social elites she was speaking of to regulate their family size so accurately. She did speculate that if working class Catholic women employed some form of contraception to minimize the risk of pregnancy then they felt compelled to neglect

their confessional duty for fear of tarnishing the sanctity of the confessional with a dishonest confession. To make a confession and choose not to divulge such a critical lapse in faith is tantamount to lying before God. Some were convinced of the wisdom of making no confession rather than make a false one. Of course, missing confession was a serious decision to have to make given the vigilance of the priest in overseeing the spiritual lives of his parishioners, particularly the female members.

We have also witnessed the function of children in the urban industrial setting from a young age. Their role in childhood was so often one of preparation for adult life. Cassie Kane asserted that from a very young age she was expected along with her sisters to attend to household chores, including polishing the brasses and blackleading the grate. In her teenage years, she was expected to have these things done before being allowed out on a Friday evening. Her brothers meanwhile were not party to these chores. Their domestic tasks revolved around making money by working outside the home to add to the household income. Through the use of oral testimony, we have seen the sort of gender-based predestination that existed in the inter-war period industrial setting.

If we are to a greater or lesser degree products of our socio-economic context, then here we have a perfect view of the shaping process at work, i.e. domestic female and non-domestic male. The work routines that the informants were exposed to and trained in as children did not simply ally them to these sorts of tasks in later life, it set the parameters for their future ambitions and aspirations.

Ambitions from an early age were clearly set by the economic circumstances of the family home. Consequently, when Liz MacKenna and Cassie Graham were recommended for bursaries and further education because of the potential their

teachers saw in them, the opportunities were forfeited in favour of the immediate earning power of the two young women. Their opposition at that time was non-existent because the expectation had been that millwork awaited them. However, in later years the opportunity to broaden the mind and the potential for work was recognised as a chance wasted. In Liz Mackenna's words, "it was jist too bad, that ... The way things turned out."

There was a resilience and adaptability about the lives of the informants which resonates throughout the present thesis, and which is more obvious in their recollections of enjoyment and entertainment than anywhere else. The notion that teenage and youth entertainment was aligned to courtship and marriage comes across strongly. The dance lessons in the back court or in the close were designed to equip them for proper dancing at which "boy meets girl", as Margaret O'Donaghue believed. This was where relationships were forged and partners were found. Marriage, of course, has been recollected as a method of escaping terribly crammed circumstances in the family home. Cassie Graham painted an incredible picture for us of the married female leisure experience. Snatching moments to relax from their daily schedule, the women regularly gathered down by the shore with their children in a sort of pioneering creche-scheme between the towering shipyards and the thunder of the riveting, punching and hammering. Talking and socialising at the water's edge, amid the industrial furore around them, shows such an ability to be at once oblivious to and at one with their surroundings and adaptable to the point of wringing pleasures out of circumstances that would drive others permanently indoors.

I have been able, throughout the study, to draw on traditions and customs elsewhere in Europe to make comparisons with the experiences recounted by the respondents in this study. From the Gaelic cultures of the Highlands of Scotland and Ireland to Scandinavia and the central and eastern European cultures of Austria, Hungary and Romania I have compared and contrasted religious customs and beliefs, and traditions surrounding the realms of work, courting, entertainment and death. By drawing on these comparisons I was able to view the experiences of the contributors to this study in the wider European cultural context.

The apparent paradoxes of life in inter-war Port Glasgow for the women interviewed are actually only paradoxes to outsiders. Not outsiders from another socio-economic context, but those who come from out-with the period in question. For those women and men in Port Glasgow, their world was as ordinary and natural as we see ours. For the Portonians of this period, whose testimony does not appear in this present thesis, other recollections will exist to add to the stock of knowledge on the people's history. Oral testimony remains to be gathered to expand some themes only mentioned in this work.

The obvious comparative study of the Protestant female experience of community identity in the town's Glen area also requires to be undertaken. And, apart from broad studies on community identity, there is the task of pursuing single-issue recordings like the female work experience in the town's ropework mill, commercial outlets and domestic service to be considered. Again, an interesting theme introduced in the work but requiring further study is the issue of mental mapping or the proliferation of informal place-names. Protestants and Catholics in the Port were familiar with the town's "Fenian Alley" and "Pagan Alley" as places recognised respectively as having

more or less Catholic inhabitants. Continuing this topic the housing around St John's church remains known to this day as the "Vatican City". Similarly, an area not far from the church that was home to some Irish families from around County Tyrone earned the sobriquet "Dungannon Court" when its formal name was simply Balfour Street. The naming of places according to religious and cultural criteria and on the basis of the ethnicity of those who lived there is fundamental to the notion of identity. These topics, like the obvious male-orientated history of shipyard workers in Port Glasgow, are beyond the scope of the present thesis, but will form the basis for future projects using oral testimony to elicit the personal and collective experiences of those being recorded.

This thesis has served, first and foremost, to bring to life the biographies of its informants; a story of life in Port Glasgow of yesteryear as told through the recollections of some of its inhabitants. They provide a fascinating account of the lives of ordinary people. Yet, there is no such thing as an ordinary life. All life is unique, and our life experiences make us different and interesting. Through listening to the history of those who have featured in this thesis, we gain an insight into the history of the human spirit which brought these unique individuals together in the poverty of their material world. Although different, they display in their life stories a vital sense of continuity and cultural lineage, identity and socialisation. Their testimony lays open the detail and colour of their "ordinary" lives and sounds the voice of common humanity Stanley Spencer (Patrizio 2000:51) found among the shipyard workers and their families during his time as a war artist in Port Glasgow.

> It is a strange thing, but I think true, that where human activity is arranged and organised to some constructive end [...] it will form another structure, a construction of designs and spiritual harmony.

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Cassie Graham

Cassie Kane

Cathie Hagan

Margaret O'Donoghue

Liz McKenna

Jasie Watson

Mary Hudson

Ella Wilson

Paddy Collins

Hugo Hagan

John Connaghan

Davie Morrison

Agnes Mulholland

Bessie O'Neill

Emi Donnelly

Harry Mulholland

Jim Pettigrew

Jim McBride

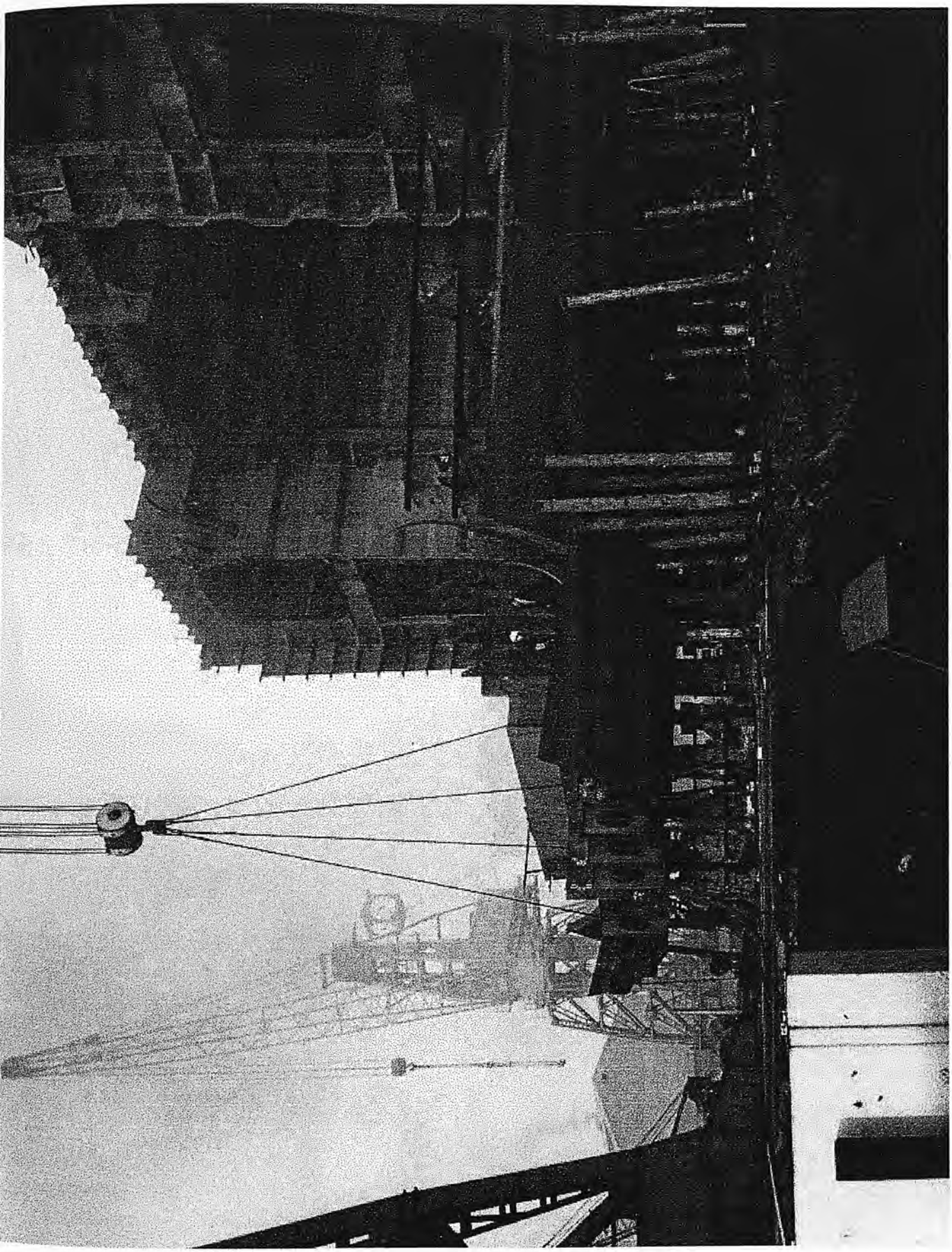
Jim McCormack

John Brown

John Waddell

Jessie Rorrison

Nan Maclean



Scott Lithgow's Kingston Yard

Figure 1

This is to Certify

that ..... *has been accepted by this Society as an apprentice, and he agrees with his employer M*.....
to serve an apprenticeship of the term of five years to commence on the..... *day of* ..... 19... *at the age of*..... *years.*

IN WITNESS WHEREOF *we have subscribed our names, and affixed the seal of our branch* ....
on the..... *day of*..... 19.....

President.

Seal.

Secretary.

Figure 2

HOW TO WRITE FORM FOR DECLARING ON SICK BENEFIT.

Date 19

To the Secretary of the *Branch of The United Society of Boilermakers, Shipbuilders and Structural Workers.*

This is to certify that I,
No. *residing at* *am ill, and have been unable to attend my employment since the** *day of* 19 , *and therefore declare on the sick benefit of the Society.*

* Here place the date of the first day you were unable to work.

(*Signed*).....

HOW TO WRITE FORM FOR DECLARING OFF SICK BENEFIT.

Date 19

To the Secretary of the *Branch of The United Society of Boilermakers, Shipbuilders and Structural Workers.*

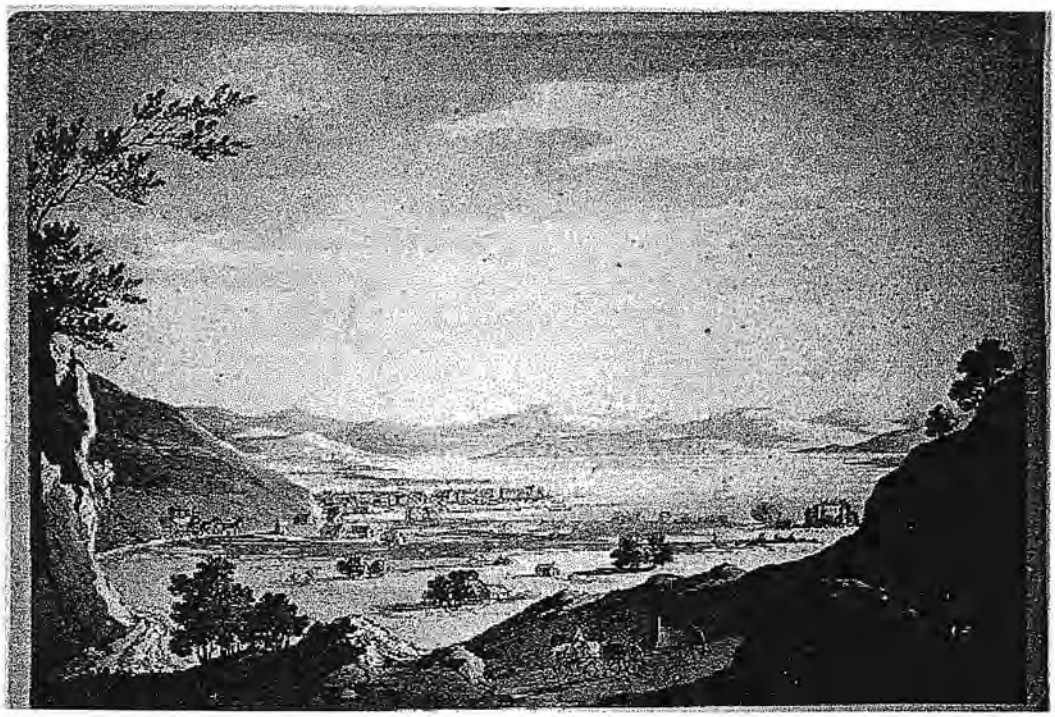
This is to certify that I,
No. *have recovered from my late illness, and was able to resume work on the day of* 19

(*Signed*).....

Shipyard Apprentice Union Card

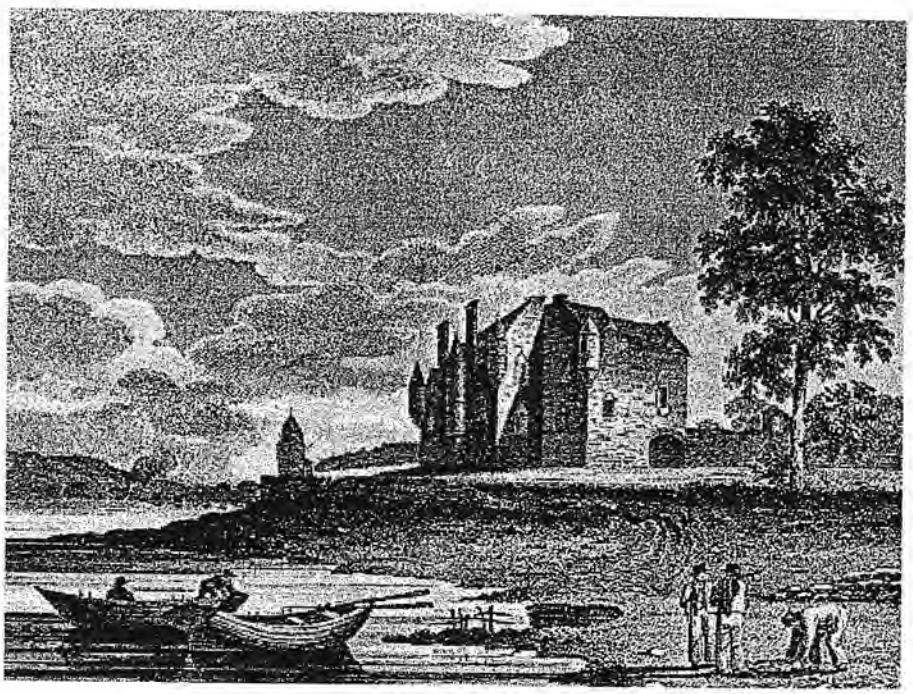
Port women attending a launch in Ferguson's shipyard

Figure 3



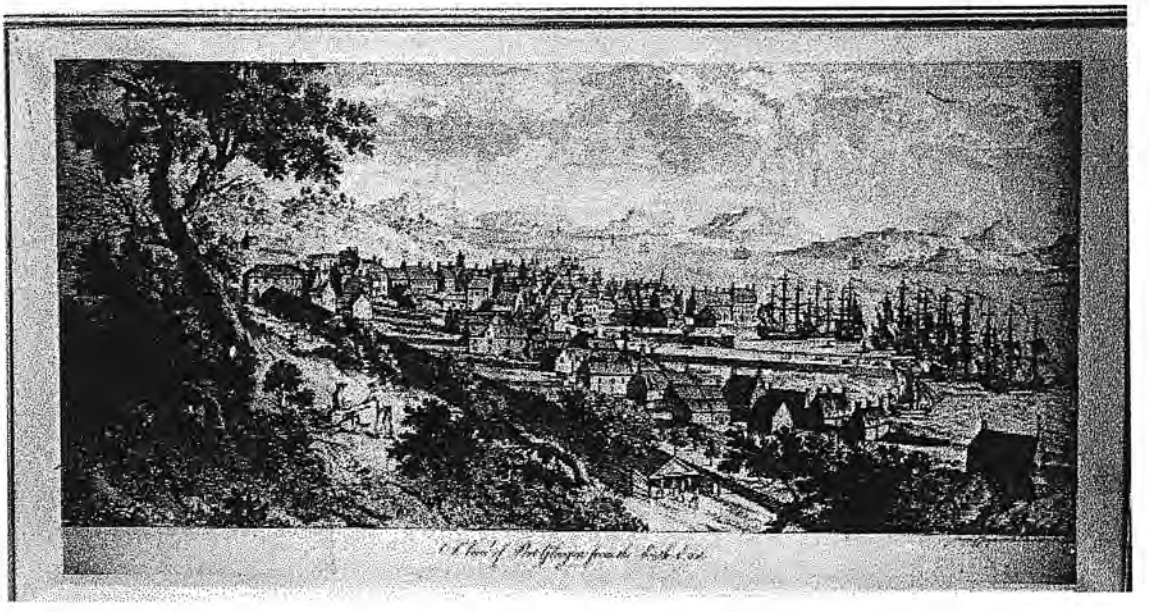
Port Glasgow from the south east

Figure 4



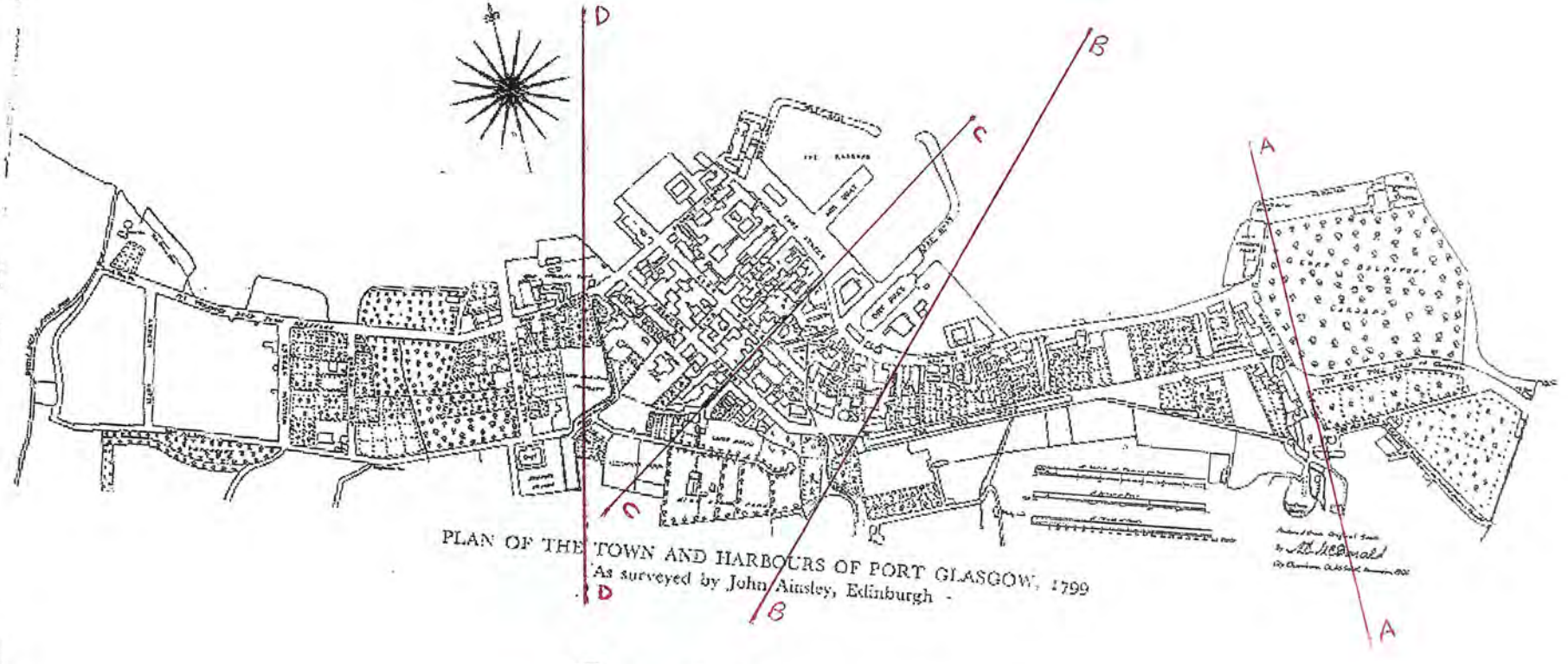
Newark Castle and the Potterrig anchorage

Figure 5



Port Glasgow in 1768

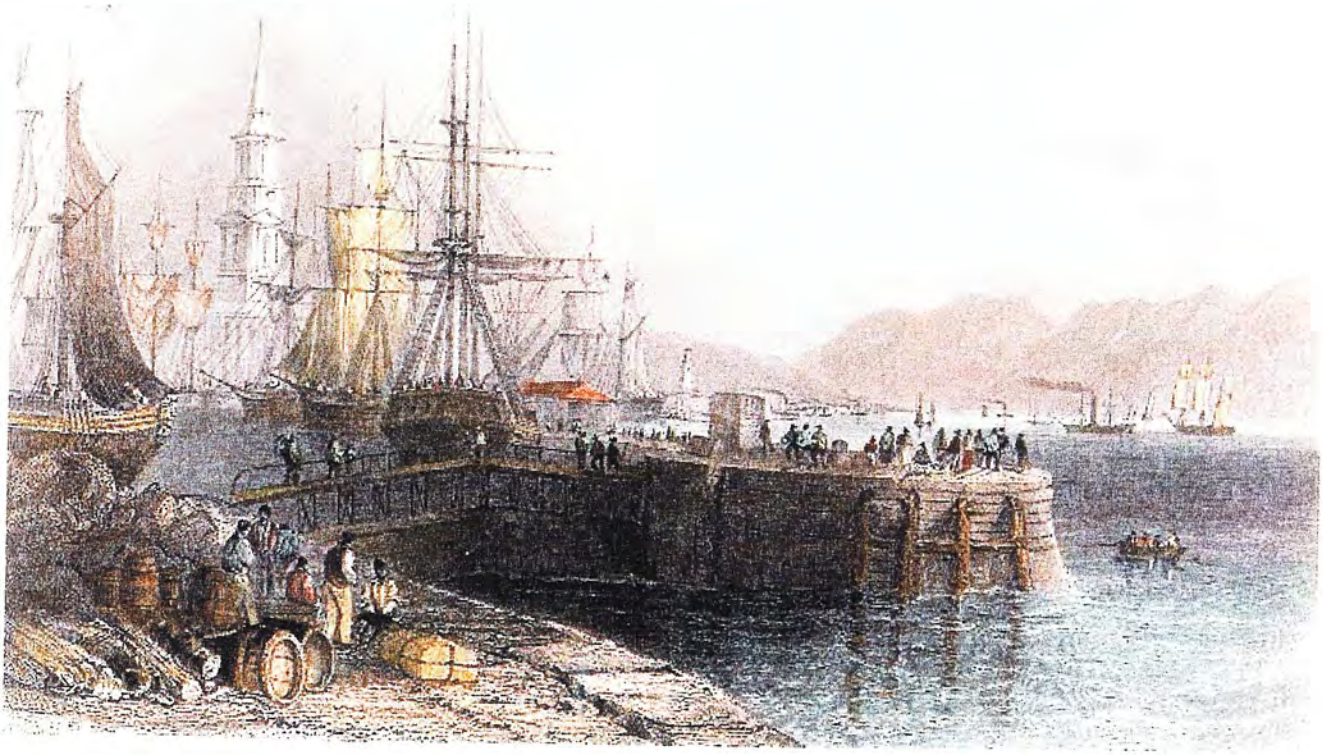
Figure 6



PLAN OF THE TOWN AND HARBOURS OF PORT GLASGOW, 1799
As surveyed by John Ainsley, Edinburgh

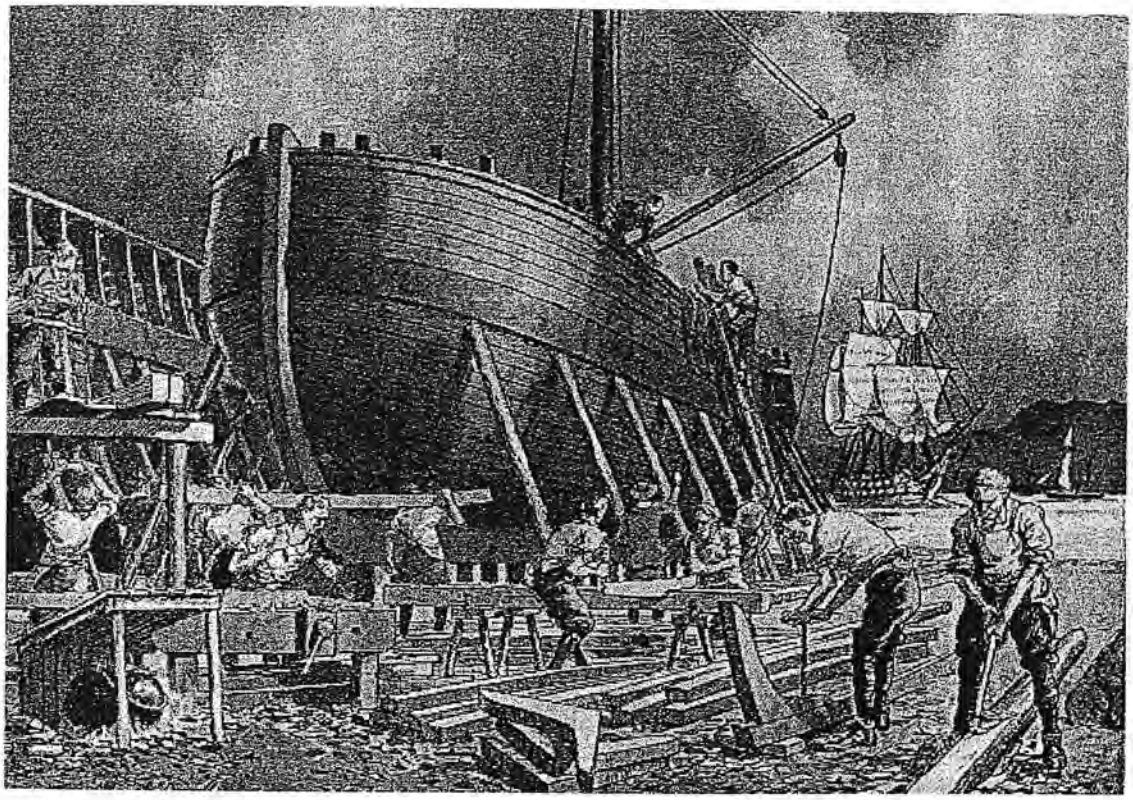
Plan of Port Glasgow in 1799

Figure 7



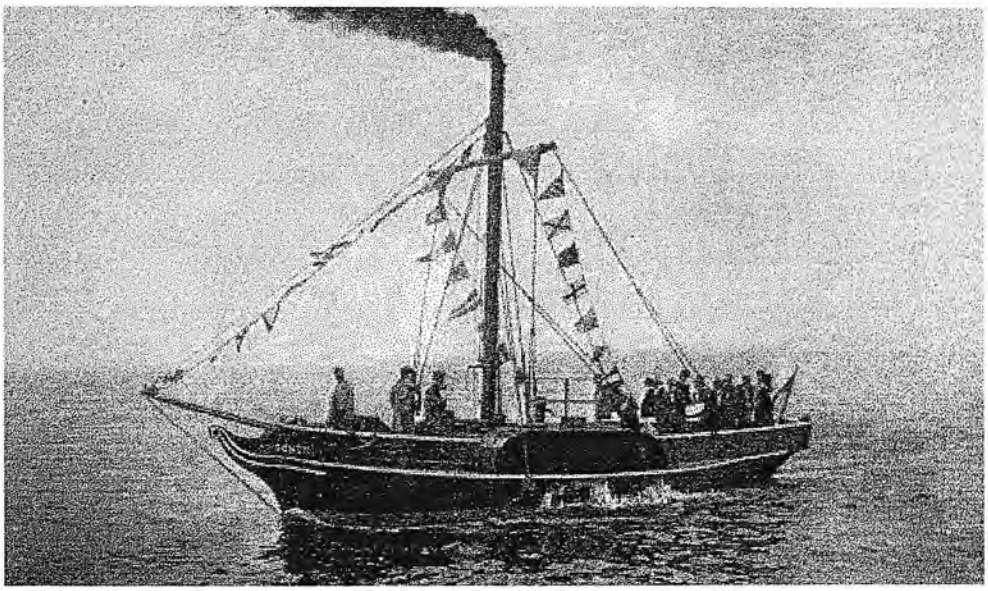
Port Glasgow's harbour

Figure 8



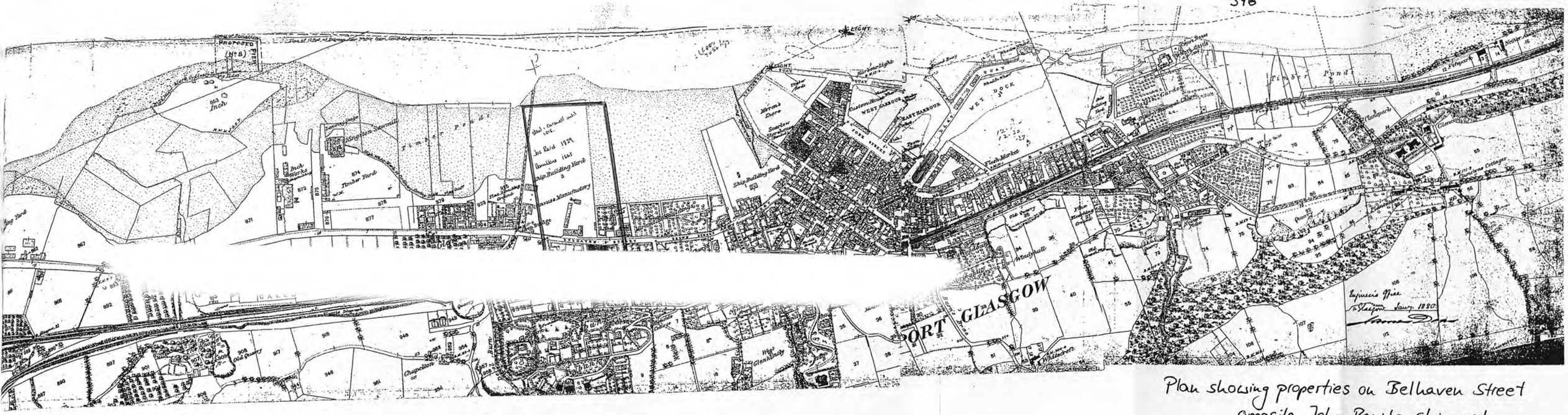
Herring Busses in construction

Figure 9



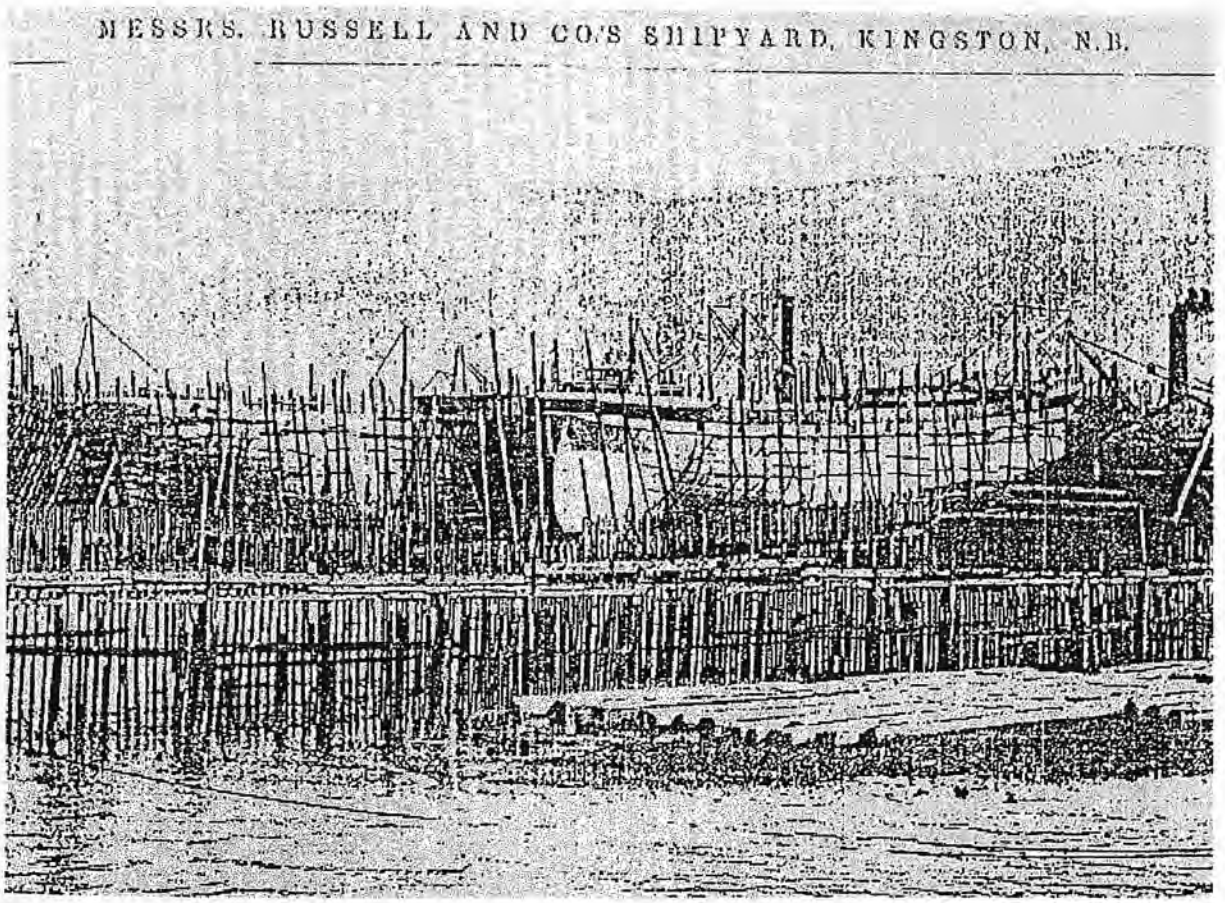
The "Comet"

Figure 10



Plan showing properties on Belhaven Street opposite John Reid's shipyard

Figure 11



Kingston yard, Port Glasgow

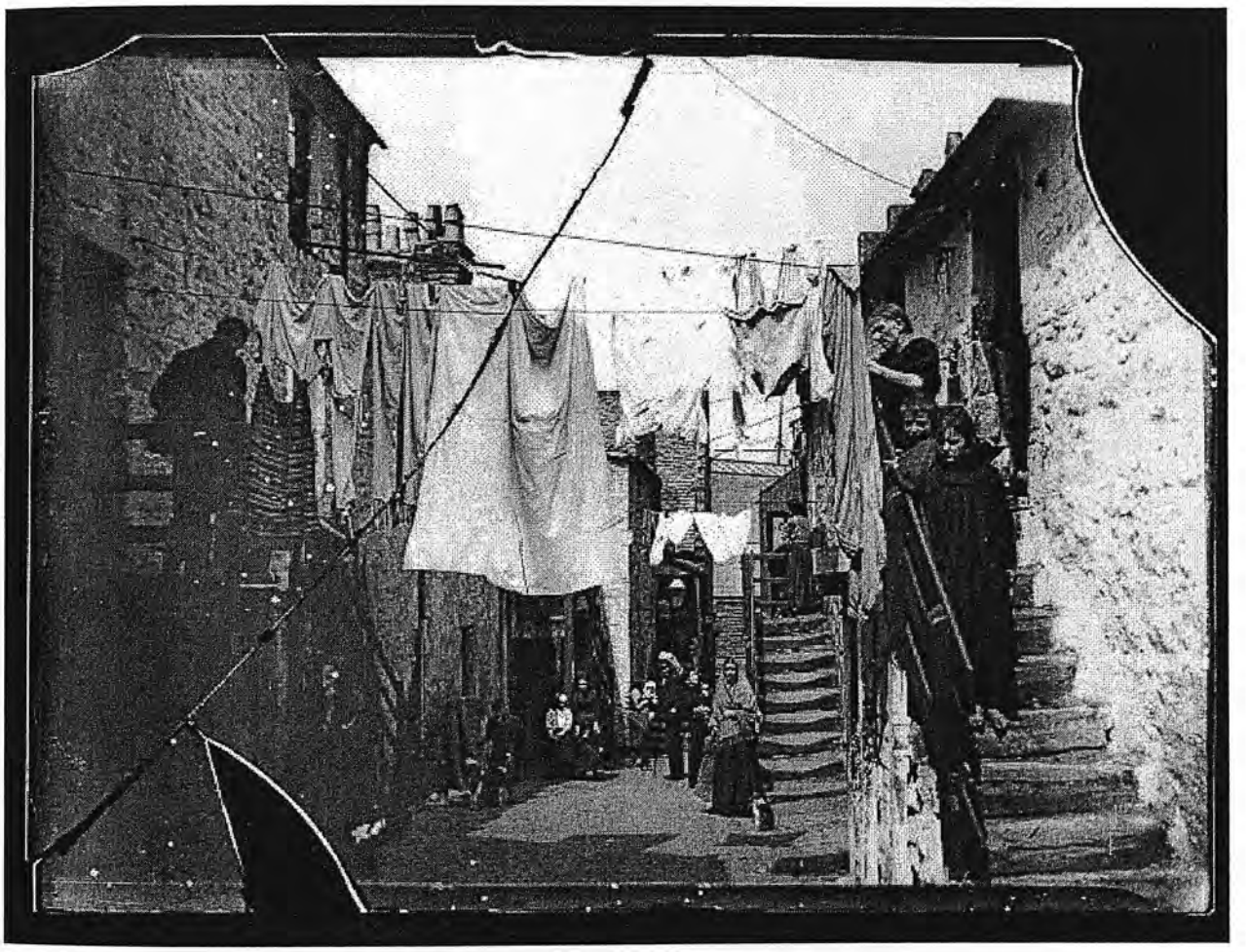
Figure 12

Black Bull Close, Bay Area, c. 1900

Figure 13

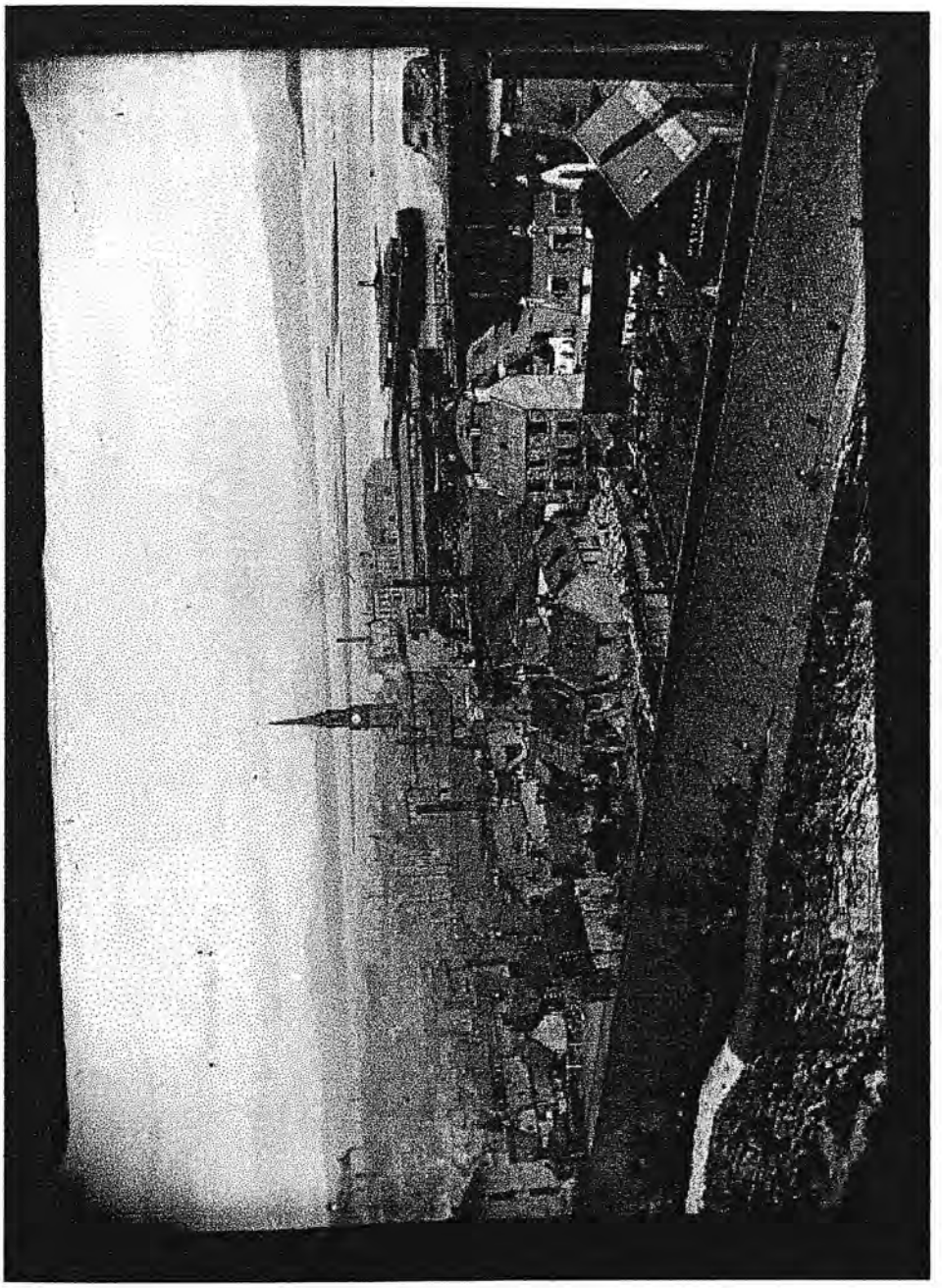
Blackstone Corner with Birkmyre's Mill in the background, c. 1900

Figure 14



Black Bull Close, c. 1900

Figure 15



The Bay Area before demolition, 1909

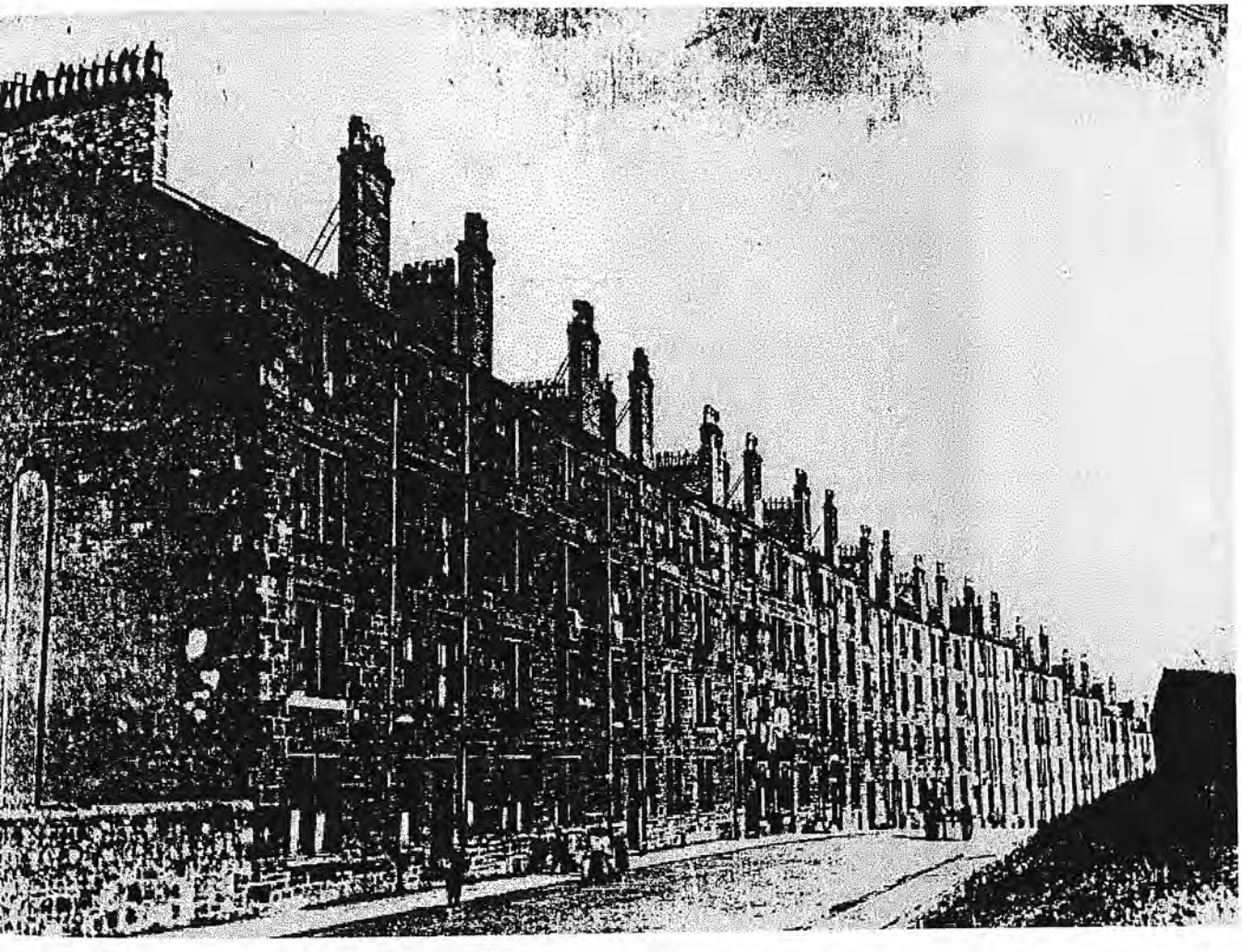
Figure 16

The Bay Area being demolished c-1909

Figure 17

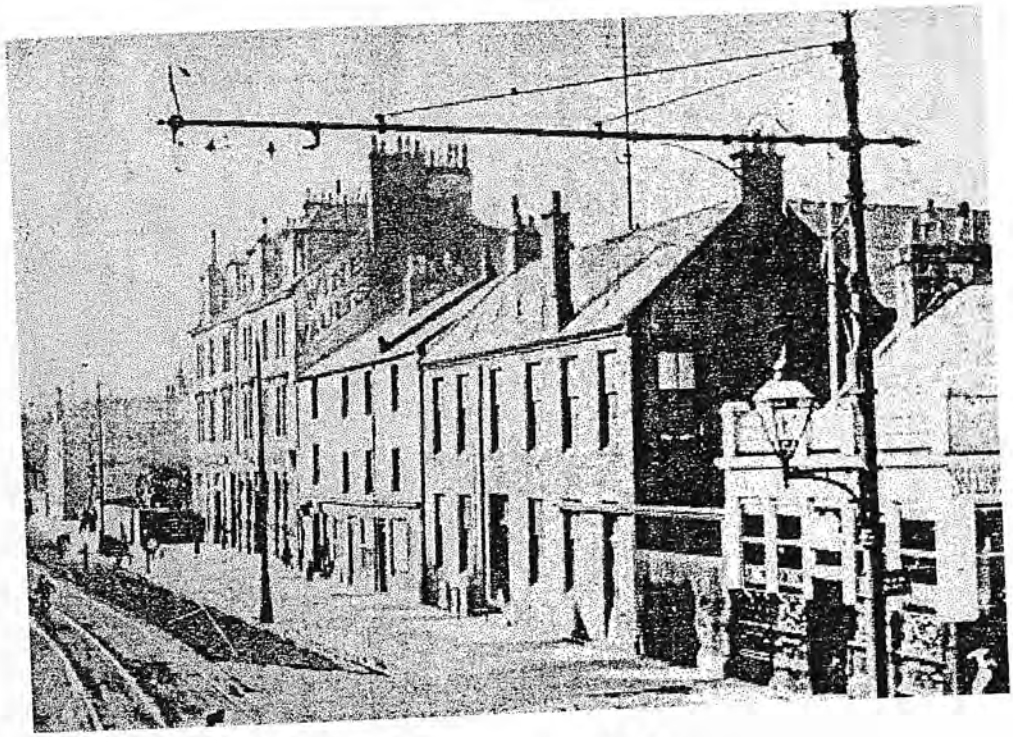
The Bay Area rebuilt, c. 1911

Figure 18



Bouverie Street c. 1900

Figure 19



The Glen Area c. 1920

Figure 20

EDITION OF 1915.

FIRTH OF CLYDE

Figure 21

4° 42′ 4° 41′

Qr. Sheet line — Dumbartonshire

THE GLEN AREA.

THE BAY AREA.

CLUNEBRAE – HONEYMOON TERRACE.

THE TOWN CENTRE.

BOUVERIE STREET.

GLASGOW ROAD – CLUNE PARK.

PORT GLASGOW

Timber Pond

Saw Mill

Reservoir

L.W.M.O.S.T.

H.W.M.O.S.T.

Glen Mill

RUBELL STREET

ARDGOWAN STREET

BELHAVEN STREET

CLYDE STREET

MARY STREET

WILLIAM STREET

JEAN STREET

BROWN STREET

SHORE STREET

HIGH HOLM STREET

BALFOUR STREET

CHAPELTON AVENUE

STIRLING AVENUE

Ch.

Sch.

Glenpark

Lodge

F.P.

Waterfall

Viaduct

Bogiewood

Football Ground

BIRKMYRE PARK

School

Glenhuntly House

Old Quarry

Tank

Glenhuntly Burn

G. & S.W.R.

GREENOCK BRANCH

Parly By. (Port Glasgow)

Ship

Timber Pond

Mud

Steamboat Quay

Ralston Quay

Mast Yard

Lighthouse (Fixed White)

Lighthouse (Flash White)

Quay

WEST HARBOUR

EAST HARBOUR

Pier

Quay

Fore Street

Scarlow Burn

East Quay

WET DOCK

Harbour Bn.

Mud

Bay Street

Sta.

Station

Old Quarry

Gourock Rope Works

Bouverie Street

Whitecroft

Old Curling Pond

Burn

Brae

Newark Castle. (A.D. 1599.)

Slip

Jetty

Dock

Slip

Castle W

Burgh By

Clune Park

Glasgow Road

Clune Brae

Weir

Weirs

Waterfall

Waterfall

Waterfall

Spring

Old Quarry

B.M. 253·6

B.M. 187·2

B.M. 306·5

B.M. 30·8

B.M. 122·2

29·1

16·3

14·2

130·2

128·8

89·4

42·1

111·7

12·7

13·3

78·6

56·4 S.P.

19·3 S.P.

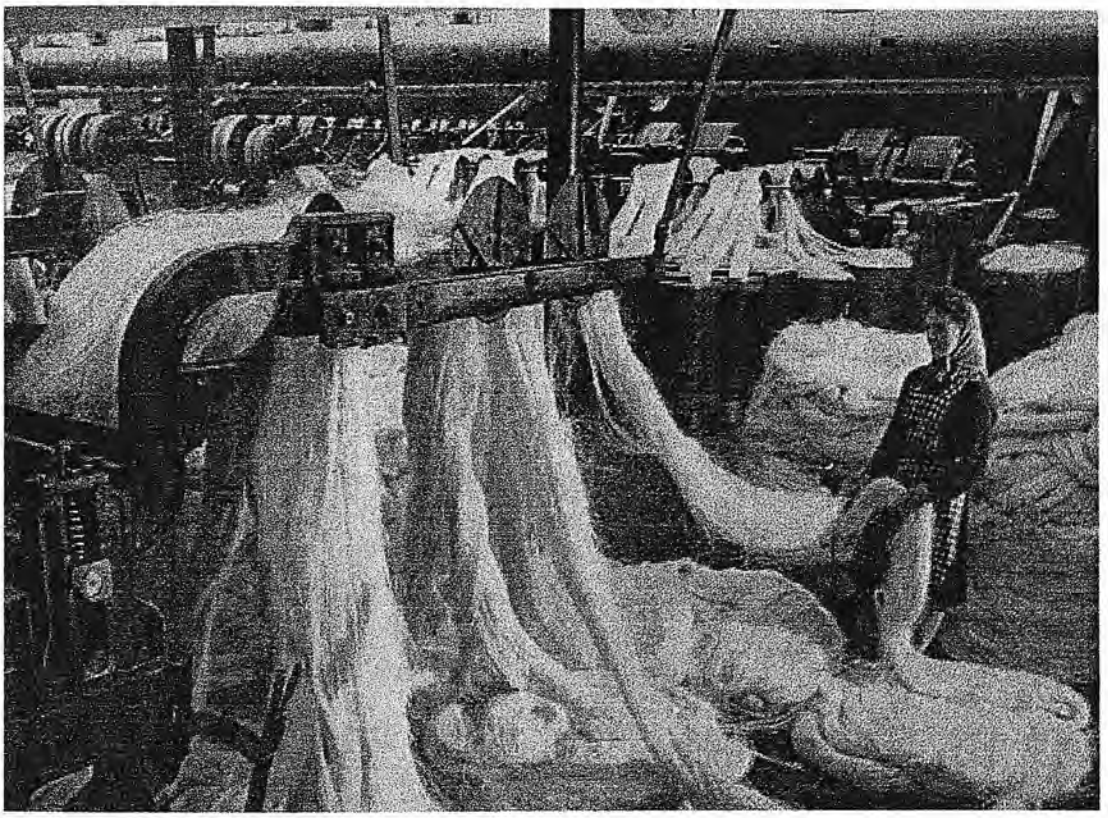
64·7

200

300

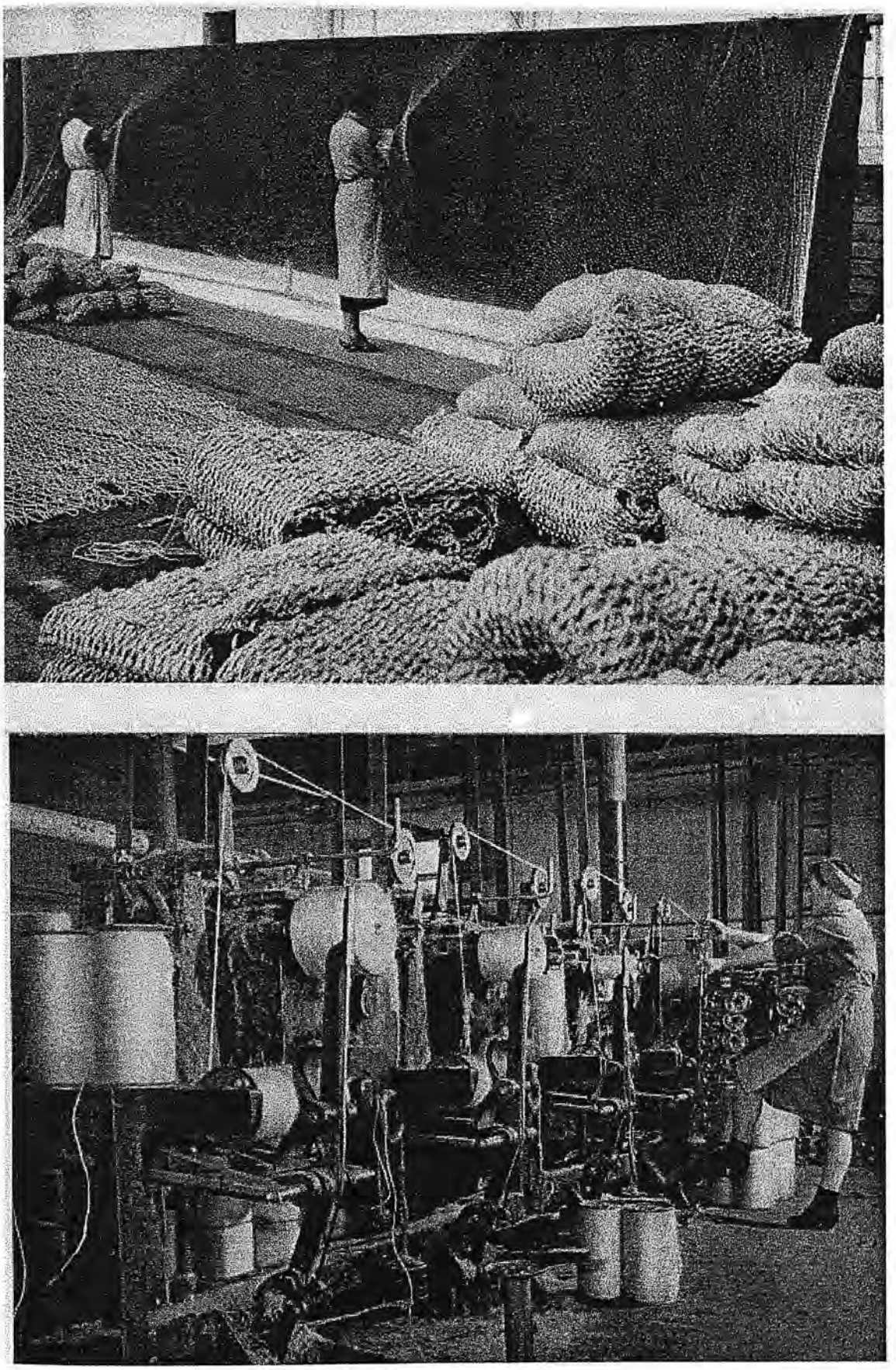
Josie and Neillie Watson's wedding 1950

Figure 22



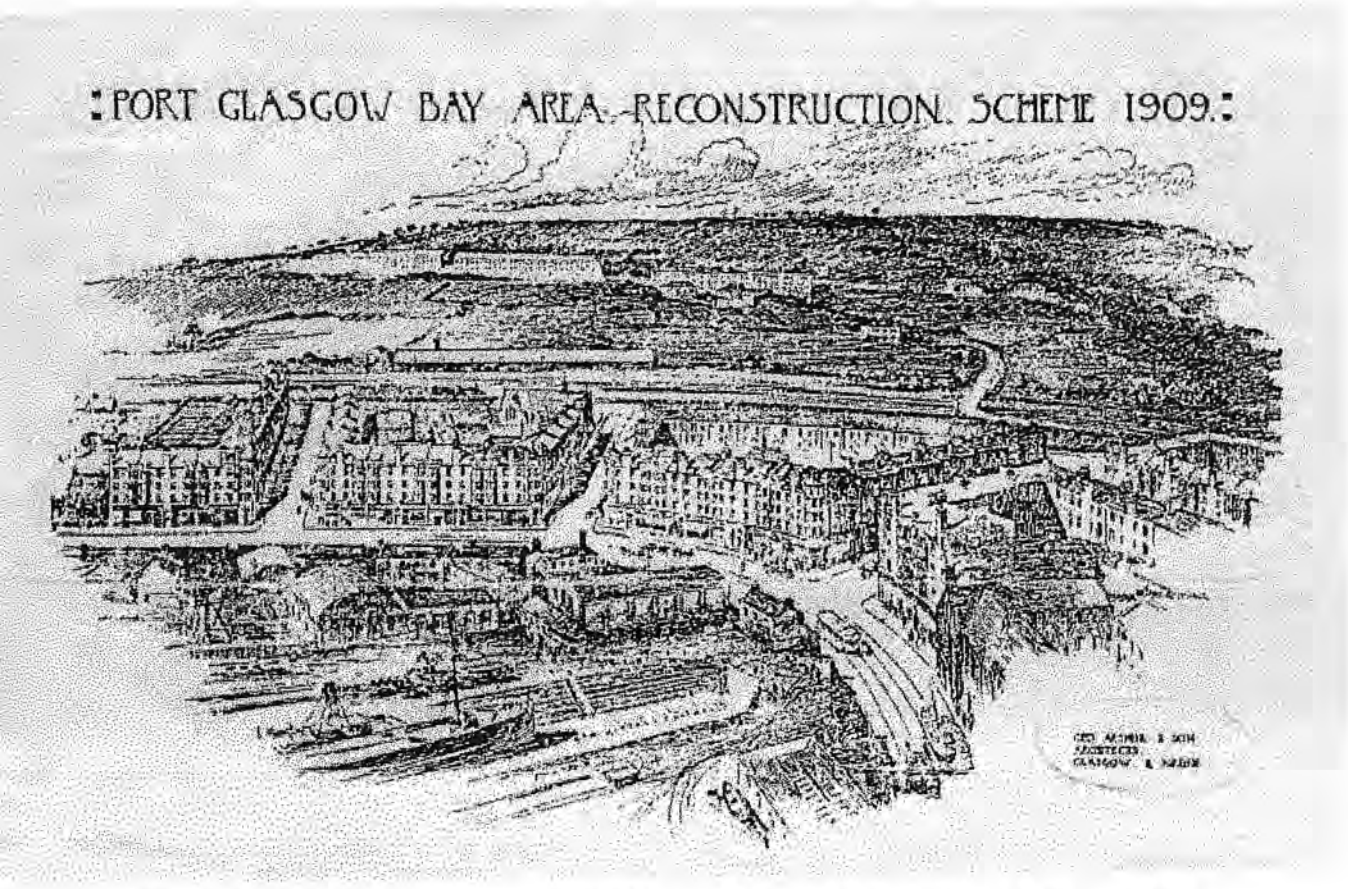
Preparing raw materials in Birkmyre's Mill

Figure 23



Birkmyre's Mill workers

Figure 24

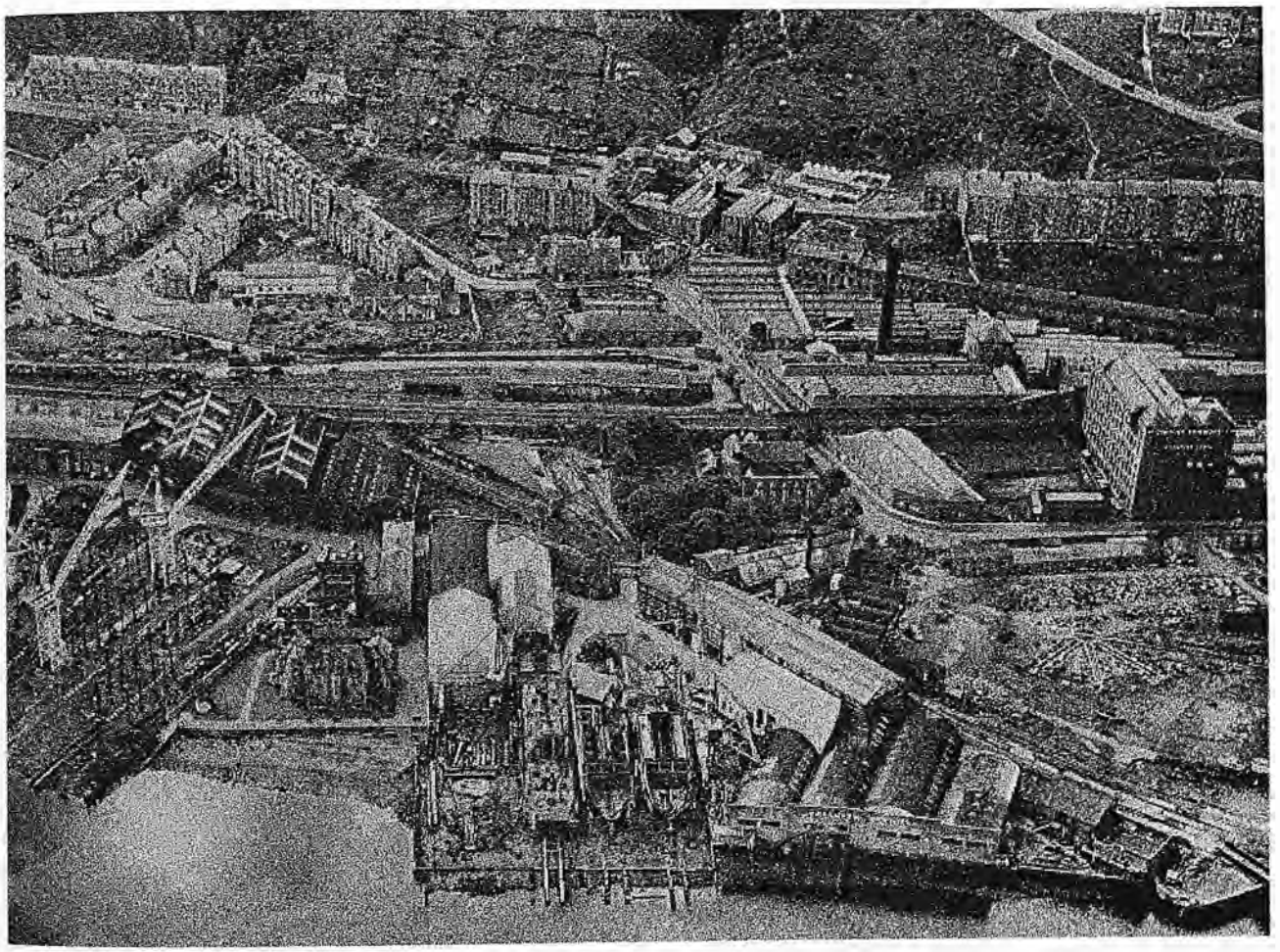


Sketch of the proposed Bay Area reconstruction 1909

Figure 25

Sandringham tenement building was situated opposite the town clock

Figure 26



Honeymoon Terrace appears on the top left-hand corner of this picture.

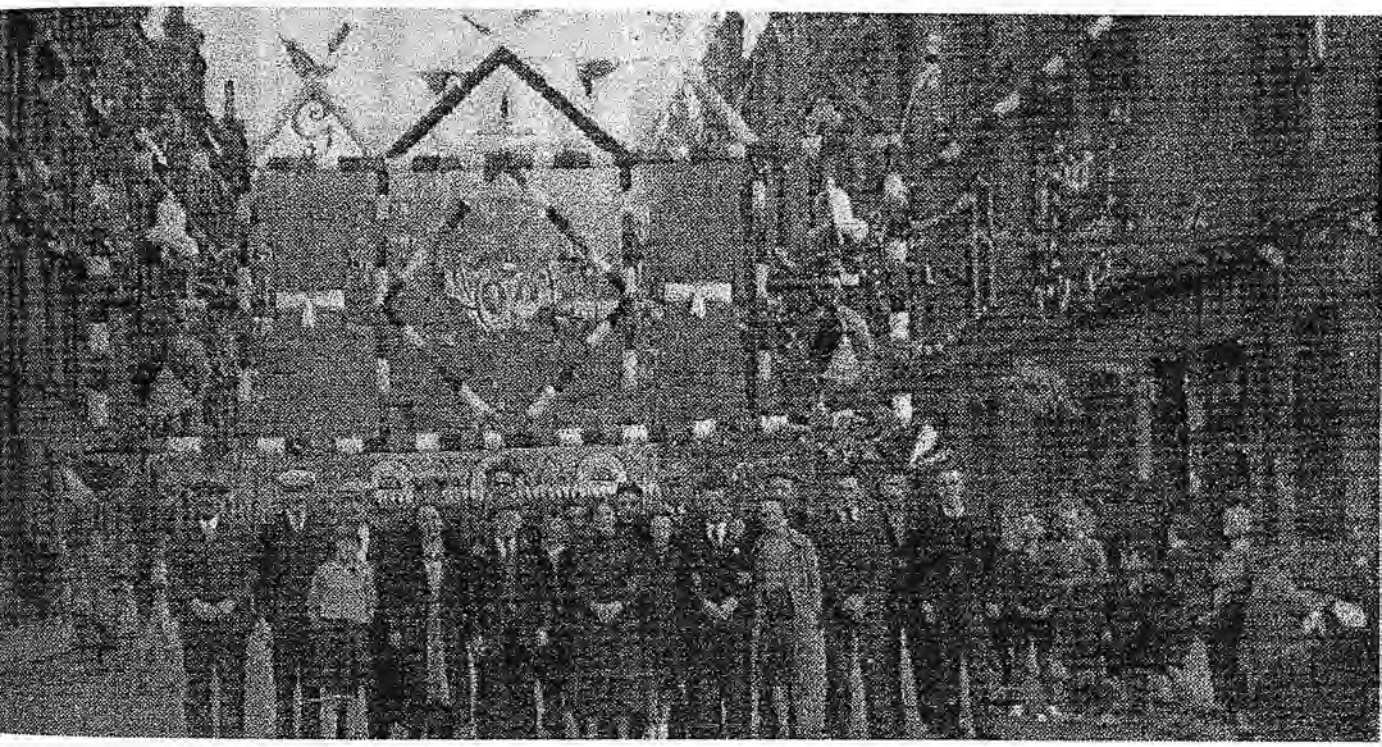
Figure 27

Birkmyre's Mill's Yankee flat

Figure 28

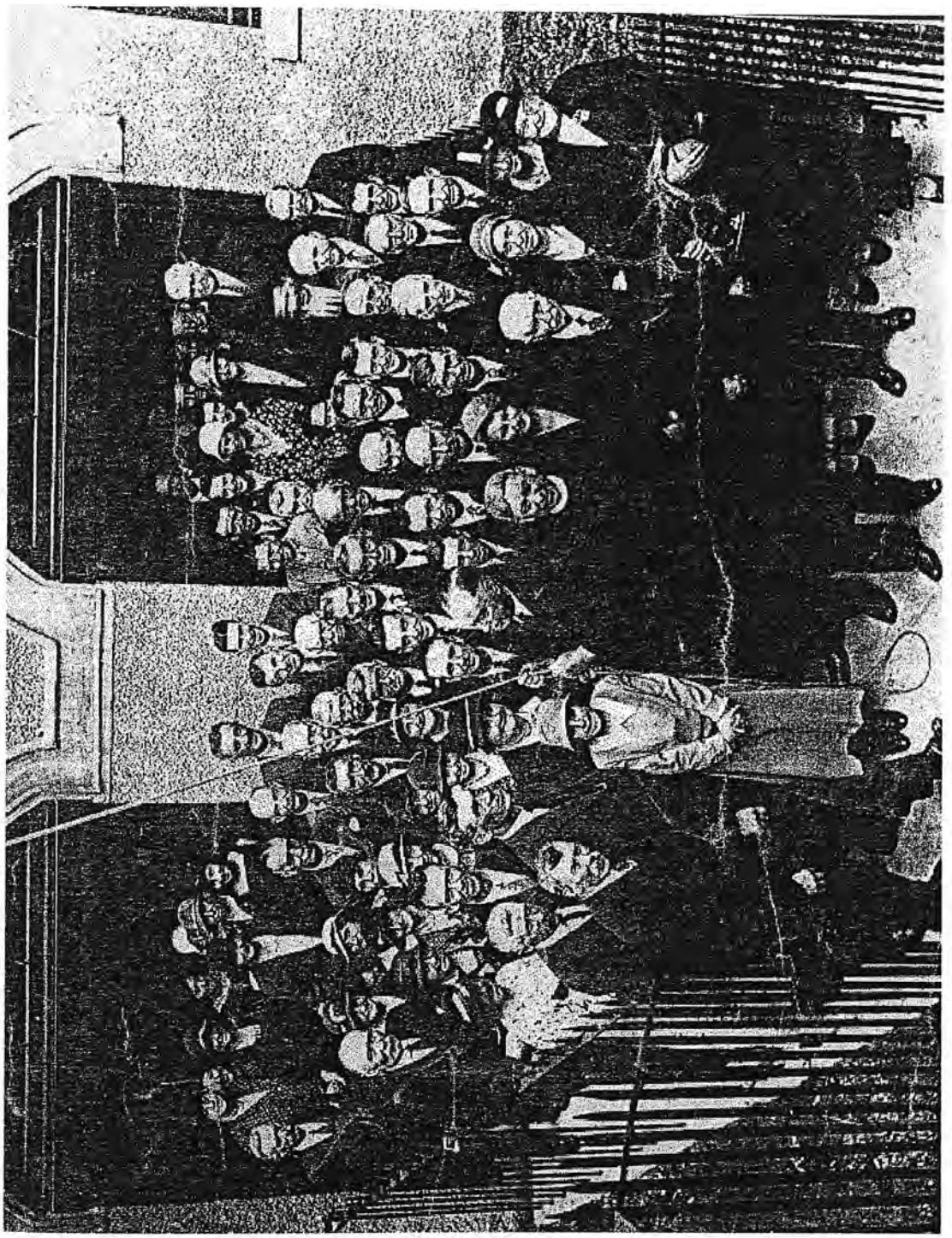
The Glen Area c. 1900

Figure 29



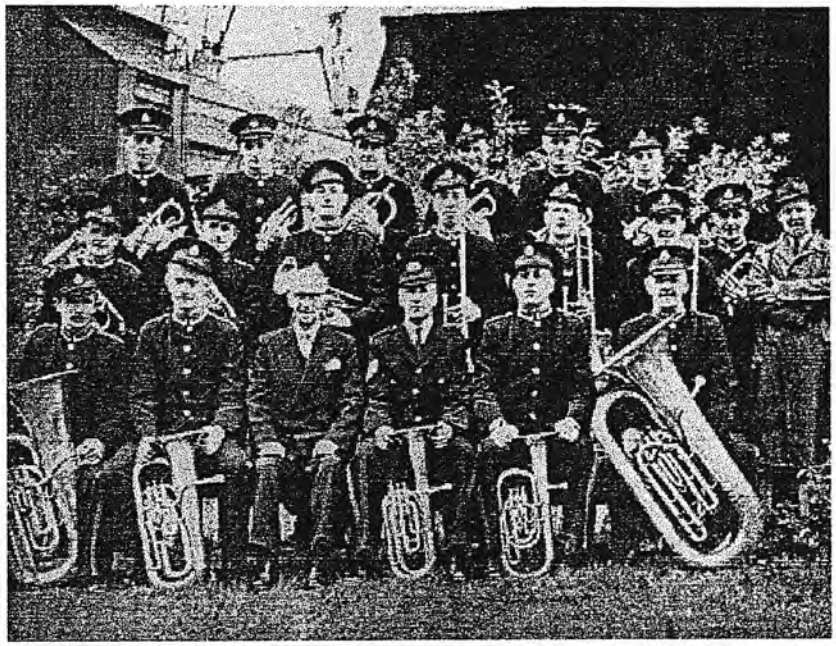
The Glen Area residents celebrate the silver jubilee of George V and Queen Mary.

Figure 30



AOH members gather for a celebration with the priest in the foreground

Figure 31



St. John's Prize Band

Figure 32

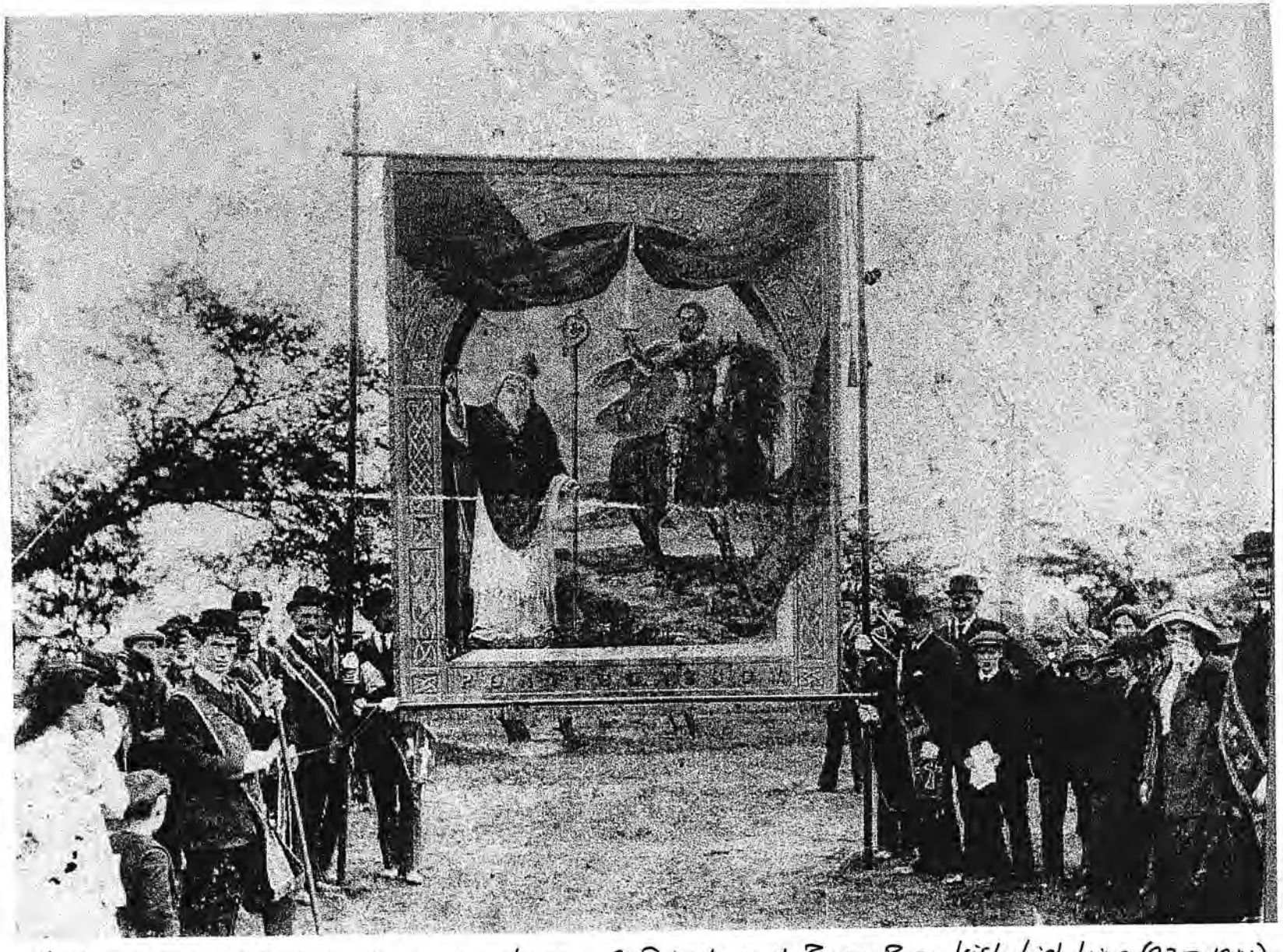


Figure 33

AOH members display their banner portraying St. Patrick and Brian Boru, Irish high king (975-1014)

Murray Shore boys take a tea-break c.1935

Figure 34

Murray Shore rowers pose for a team photo

Figure 35

Machine riveting

Figure 36

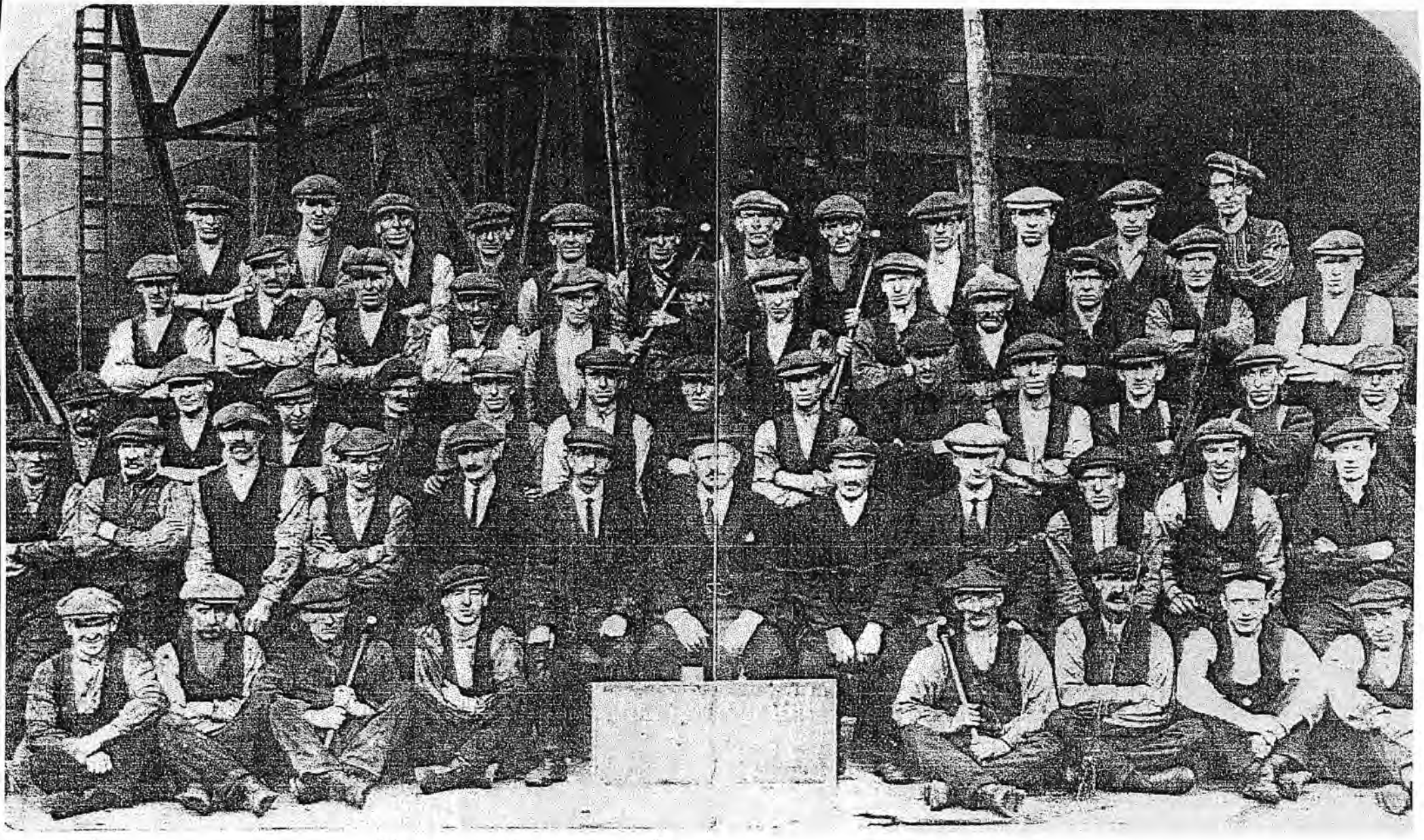


Figure 37

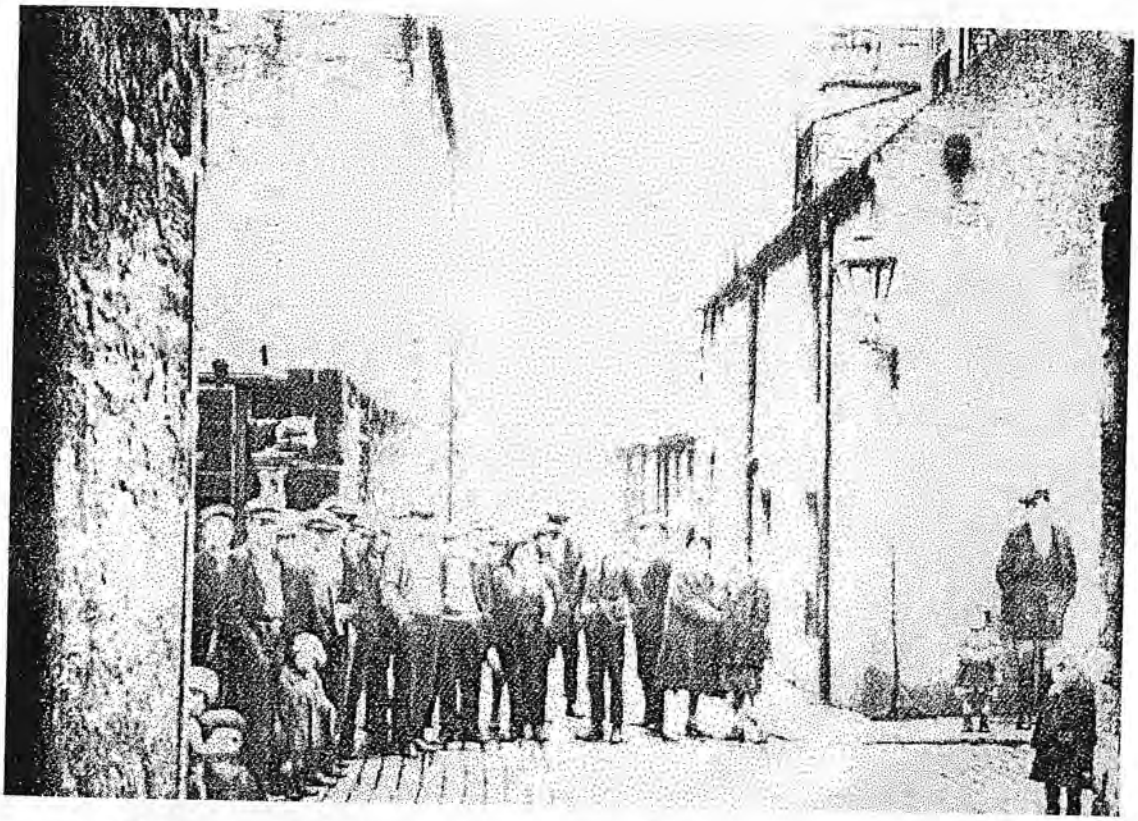
Hand riveters pose for a yard photo

Riveters waiting to start a job

Figure 38

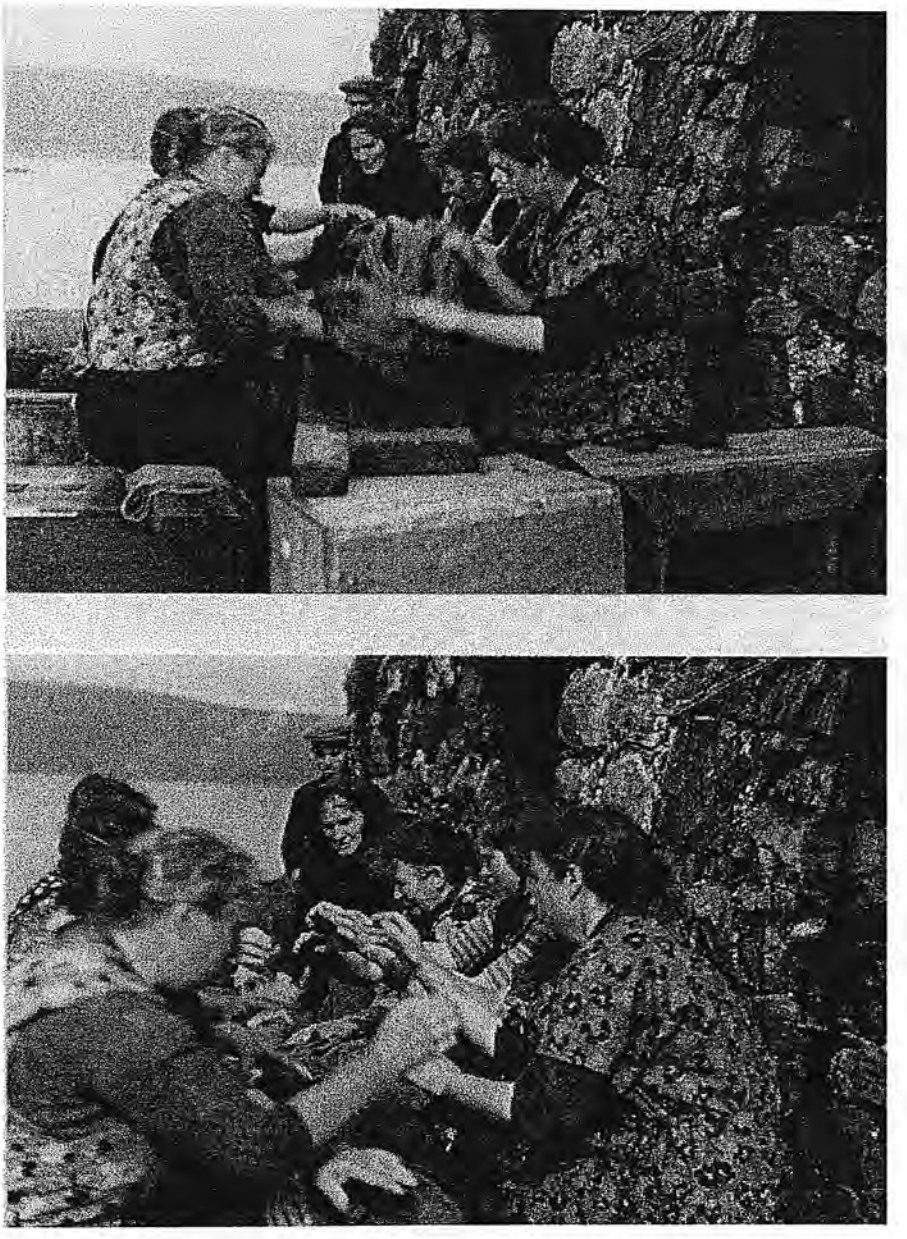
Managers discuss the job on board the vessel

Figure 39



Chapel Lane cornerboys pose for the photographer c.1930

Figure 40



Waulking in the Outer Hebrides

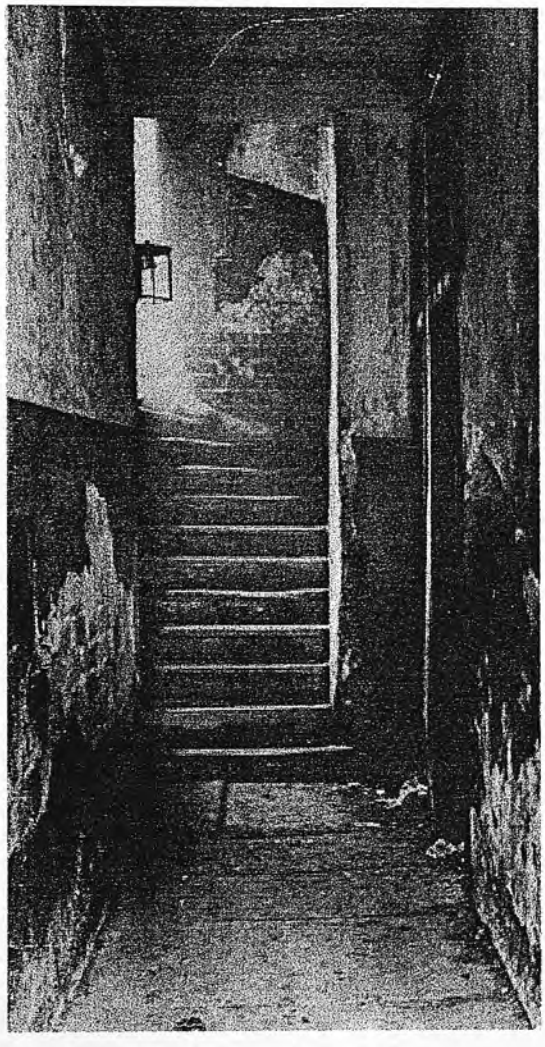
Figure 41

Bay Area dancers gather in the Labour Hall c. 1938

Figure 42

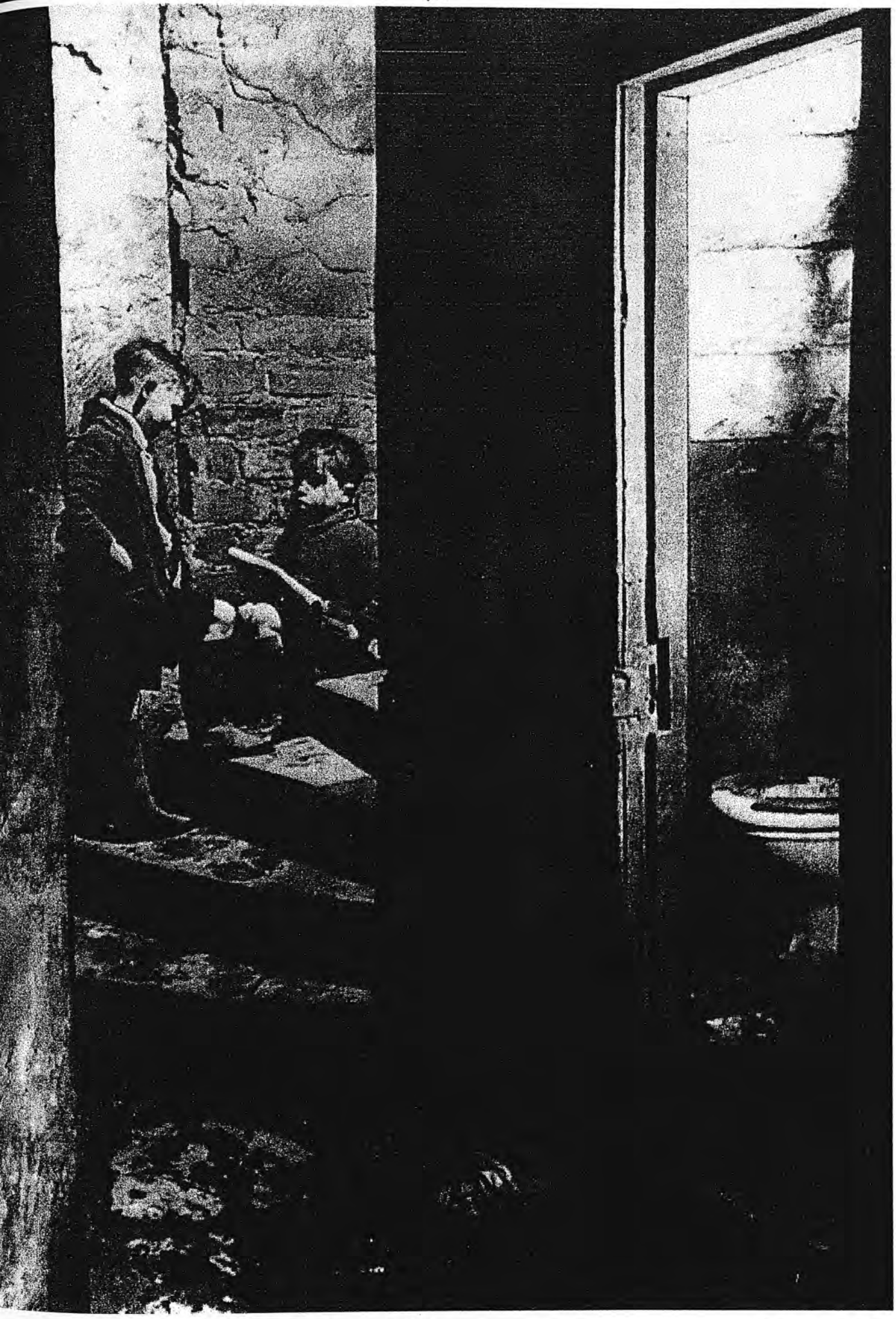
Margaret O'Donoghue dressed for dancing

Figure 43



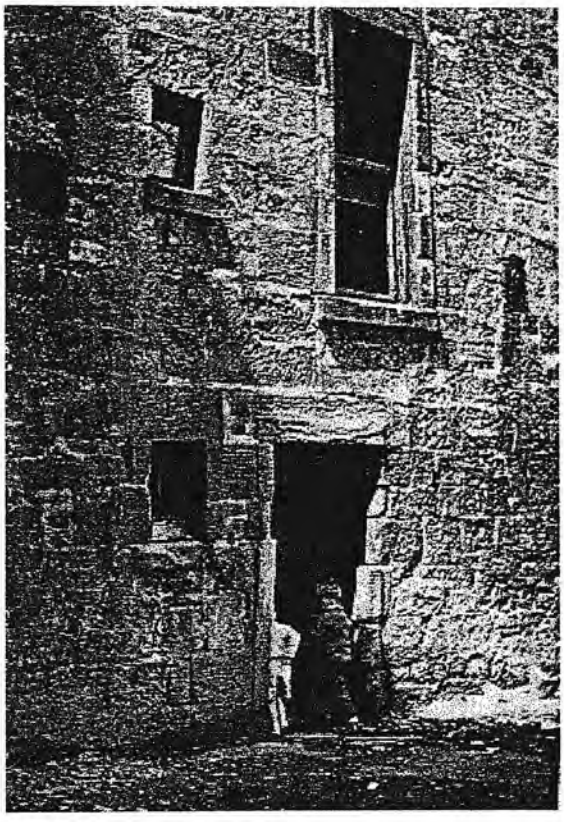
Typical working-class close in Port Glasgow c. 1930s

Figure 44



A typical close toilet

Figure 45



The back entrance to a working-class close

Figure 46

Port Glasgow's quay with shipyard cranes towering in the background

Figure 47

Mothers socialise outside the home

Figure 48

Working-class children pose for the photographer

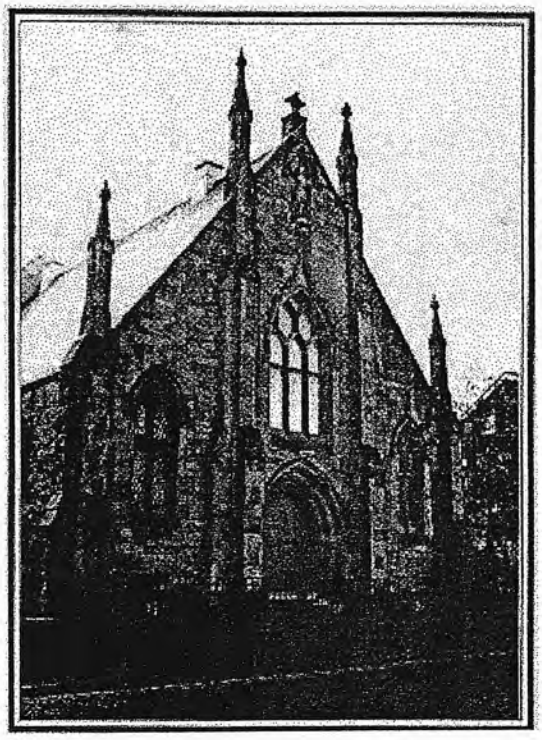
Figure 49

Blackstone Corner was among the oldest and worst kind of housing available in Port Glasgow

Figure 50

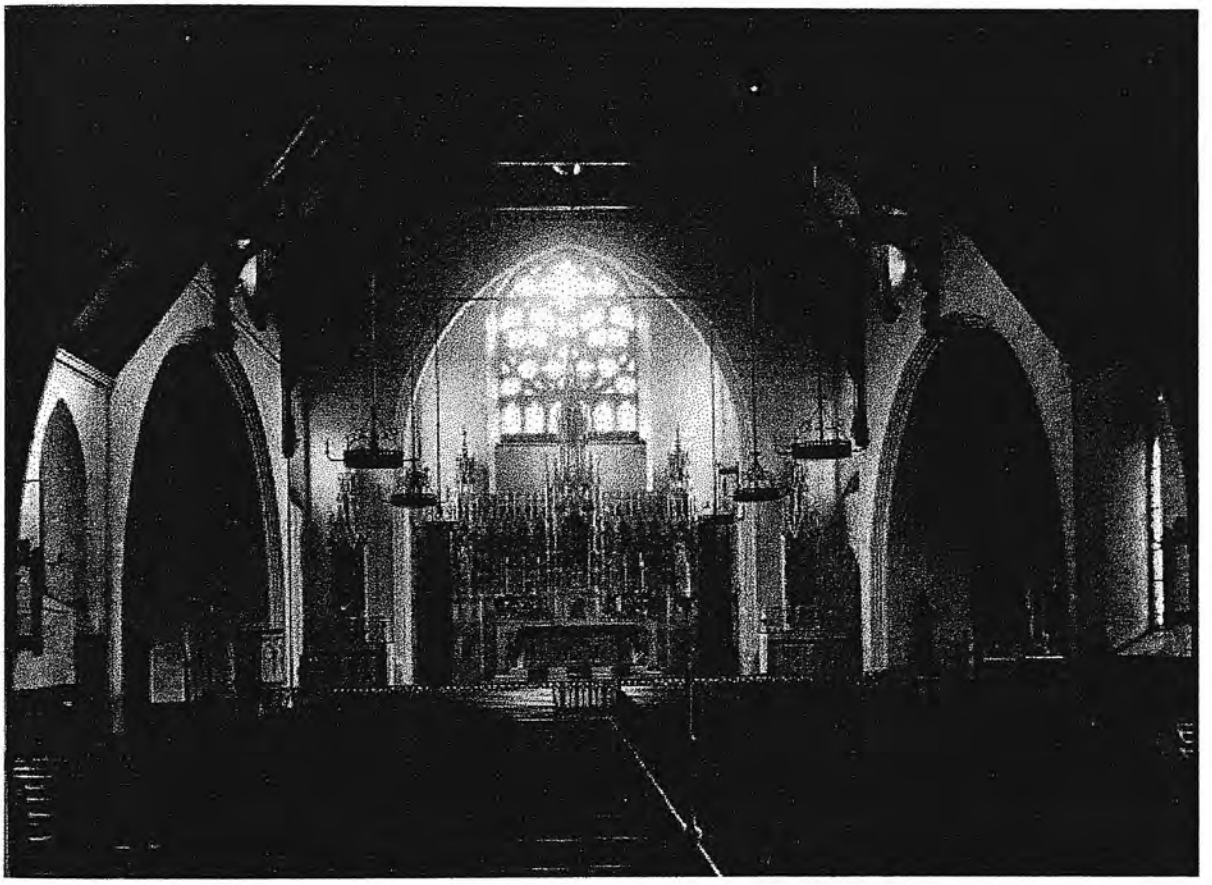
Jock Ha's Close

Figure 51



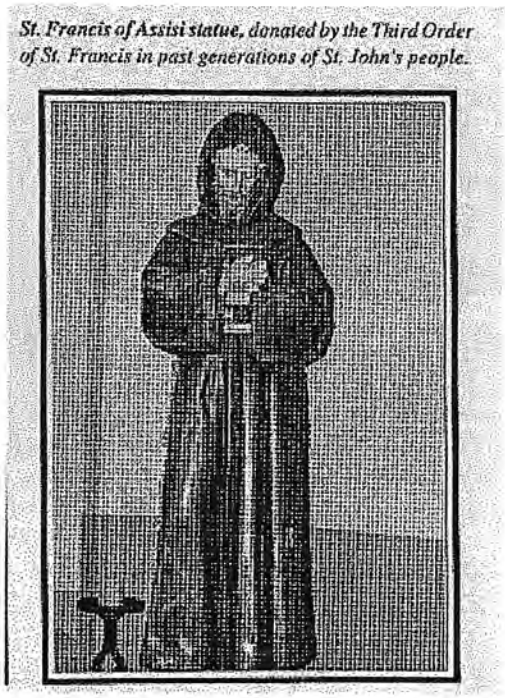
St. John the Baptist
Roman Catholic Church

Figure 52



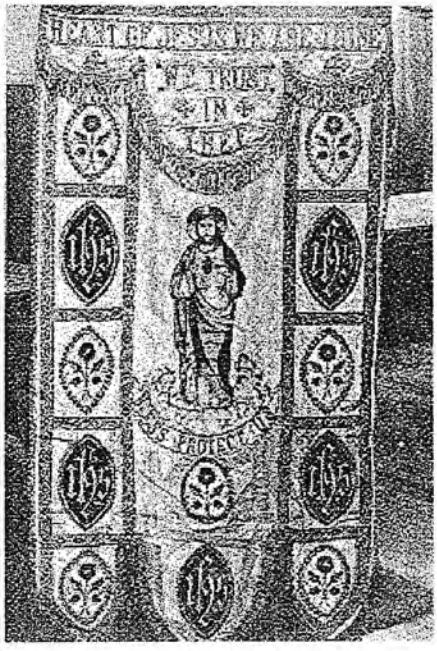
Inside St. John's church

Figure 53



St. Francis of Assisi statue in St. John's church

Figure 54



Typical Sacred Heart banner

Figure 55

6

The Roman Question.

(Photo: PIUS XI. by kind permission of "The Catholic Herald")

HIS HOLINESS THE POPE.

Bishop of Rome and Vicar of Jesus Christ.

Successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles.

Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church.

Patriarch of the West.

Primate of Italy.

Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province. Sovereign of the Temporal Dominions of the Holy Roman Church.

PIUS XI.

POPE and KING.

266th Bishop of Rome.

Born at Desio, March 31st 1857; Ordained priest, Dec., 20th 1879; Apostolic Visitor to Poland, 1918; Papal Nuncio, 1919; Promoted to Titular See of Lepanto, July 3rd 1919; Created Cardinal, June, 16th 1921; Proclaimed Cardinal, June, 21st 1921; Promoted to Archdiocese of Milan as Cardinal Archbishop, June, 16th 1921; Elected Pope, Feb. 6th 1922; Crowned Pope, Feb. 12th 1922.

THE YEAR 1929 is a memorable one for the whole Catholic World; and nowhere more so than in Great Britain. We celebrate with joy the hundredth anniversary of Catholic Emancipation; but we have another cause for thanksgiving. While we look back with pride to the hard-won triumph of a century ago, we rejoice in common with the Universal Church over the great act recently consummated in Rome. The Pontiff has ceased to be the "Prisoner of the Vatican". He is henceforth Pius XI, Pope and King.

Images of the 'Pope and King' were popular among the Port's Roman Catholic community

Figure 56

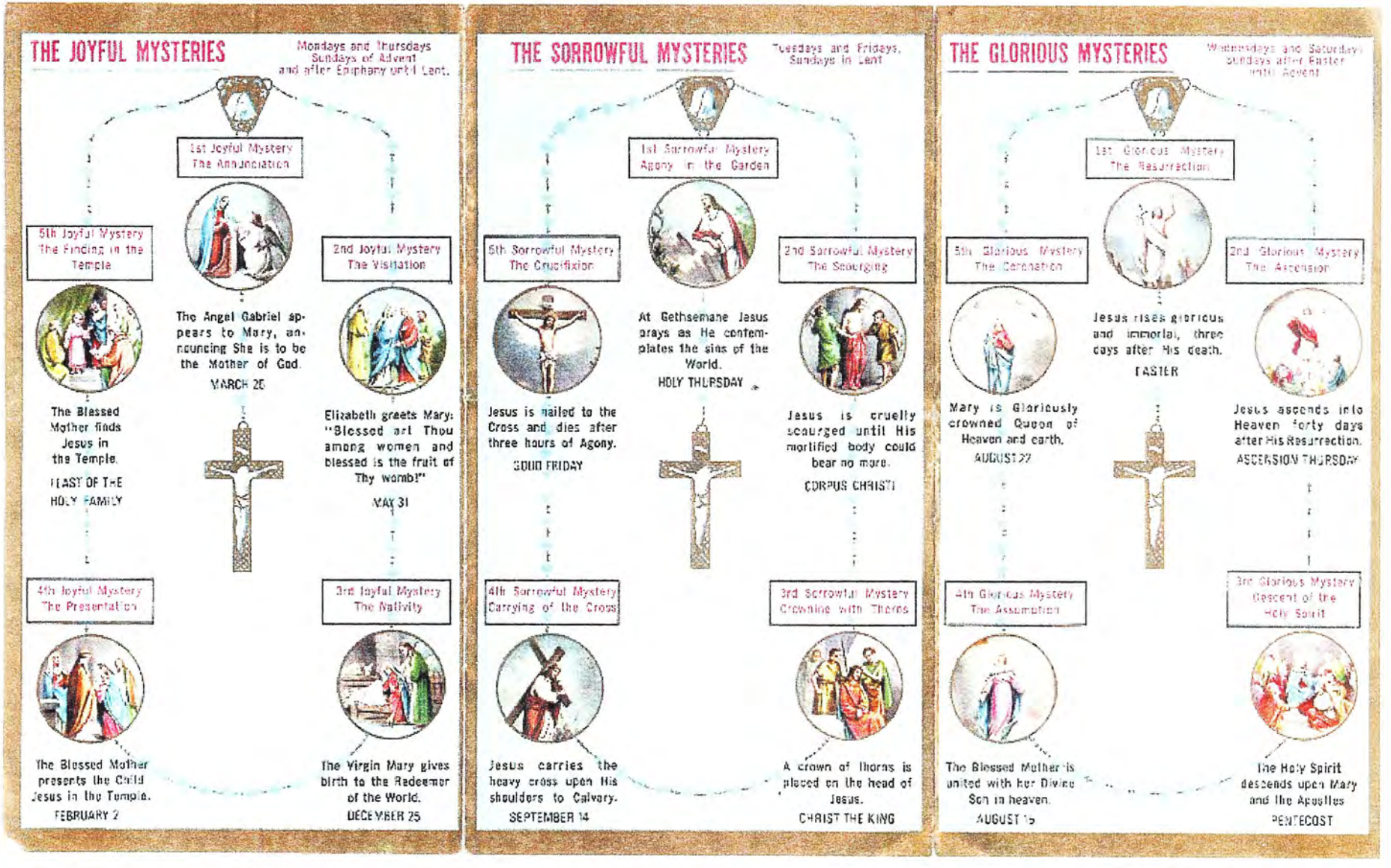


Figure 57

The prayers of the Holy Rosary

422

"Child of Prague"

Figure 58

the way of the cross

Meditation: Consider Jesus, scourged and crowned with thorns, being unjustly condemned by Pilate to die on the cross.

Meditation: A heavy cross is laid upon the bruised shoulders of Jesus. He receives it with meekness for by the Holy Cross He will Redeem the World.

Meditation: Labering under the weight of the cross, Jesus slowly sets forth to Calvary. His strength fails Him; He falls to the ground under the cross.

Meditation: Consider the meeting of the Son and the Mother, which took place on this journey. A sword of anguish pierced His Mother's heart!

Meditation: As the strength of Jesus fails, and He is unable to proceed, the executioners compel Simon of Cyrene to help carry the cross.

Meditation: The holy woman, Veronica, seeing Jesus with His face bathed in sweat and blood, presented Him her veil. He wiped His face, and left the imprint of His adorable countenance.

Meditation: The pain of His wounds and the loss of His blood increasing at every step, His strength fails and Jesus falls to the ground a second time.

Meditation: Women wept with compassion at the pitiful sight of Jesus walking along. He said to them, "Weep not so much for me, but rather for your children."

Meditation: Jesus falls for the third time. His weakness was extreme, they tried to hasten His steps when he hardly had strength to move.

Meditation: Recall how Jesus arrived at the place of His Crucifixion. The soldiers tore His clothes from His bleeding body.

Meditation: Jesus lies down upon His Cross, and extends His arms to offer up the sacrifice of His Life for our salvation. The soldiers nail Him, hands and feet.

Meditation: Recall how Jesus agonized for three hours, dying upon the Cross. Then, overcome, His Body sagged; and He breathed His last.

Meditation: Recall how two of His disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus, took Jesus' body down from His Cross and they laid Him in the arms of His stricken Mother.

Meditation: The Body of Her dearly beloved Son is laid in the tomb. The lifeless Body remains until the hour of its glorious Resurrection.

Stations of the Cross

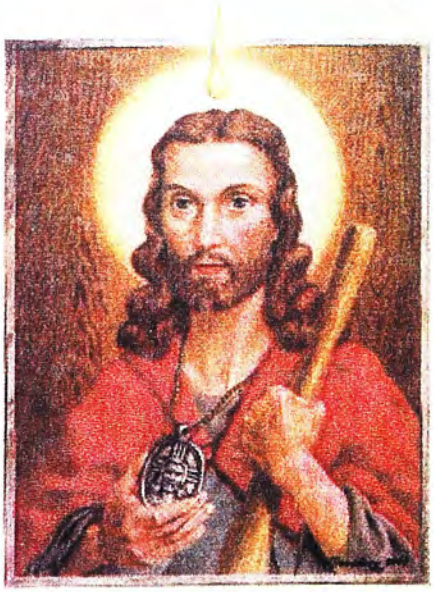
Figure 59

St. Joseph's Union Prayer

O MOST Holy and Immaculate Mother of God and Glorious St. Joseph, Guardians and Patrons of Our House and Union, intercede for us, your devoted children, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Pope Leo XIII on February 27, 1883, granted an indulgence of 300 days to all members of St. Joseph's Union who recite this prayer twice a day. Indulgence of 200 days for recital once daily.

© 6J6



Perpetual Novena in Honour of
ST. JUDE THADDEUS

Popular images and prayers: note the indulgence granted to those who recite the St. Joseph's Union Prayer.

Figure 60

The Perpetual Novena

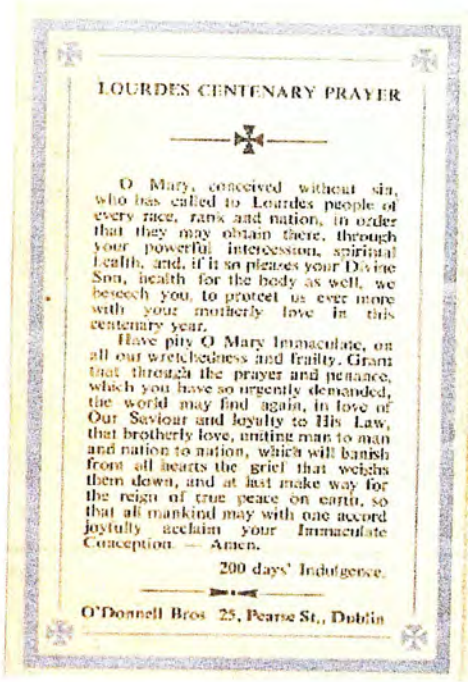
In Honour of

Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

THREEPENCE

Novena booklet to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

Figure 61


LOURDES CENTENARY PRAYER

O Mary, conceived without sin, who has called to Lourdes people of every race, rank and nation, in order that they may obtain there, through your powerful intercession, spiritual health, and, if it so pleases your Divine Son, health for the body as well, we beseech you, to protect us ever more with your motherly love in this centenary year.

Have pity O Mary Immaculate, on all our wretchedness and frailty. Grant that through the prayer and penance, which you have so urgently demanded, the world may find again, in love of Our Saviour and loyalty to His Law, that brotherly love, uniting man to man and nation to nation, which will banish from all hearts the grief that weighs them down, and at last make way for the reign of true peace on earth, so that all mankind may with one accord joyfully acclaim your Immaculate Conception. — Amen.

200 days' Indulgence.

O'Donnell Bros 25, Pearse St., Dublin

Popular images and prayers

Figure 62

OUR LADY OF QUITO

Popular images of Our Lady

Figure 63

Our Lady of Quito

(Ecuador)

NUMEROUS graces reward each day the faith of those who invoke the Mother of Sorrows under this title.

Let us then give special honour to this Holy Virgin, keeping her picture in our homes, and placing ourselves and our property under her protection, whilst begging of her to intercede for us with her Divine Son for the safety of all those we love.

To encourage the faithful to pray before this holy picture and to propagate it, His Holiness Pope Pius X, by his own hand, has on the 12th of October, 1907, graciously granted to all the faithful who shall recite three Hail Marys before it an indulgence of 100 days.

Permissu Superiorum.

Carmelite Press, Faversham, Kent.

PRAYER TO OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP

O MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP, grant that I may ever invoke Thy most powerful name, which is the safeguard of the living and the salvation of the dying. O Purest Mary, O Sweetest Mary, let Thy name henceforth be ever on my lips. Delay not, O Blessed Lady, to help me whenever I call on Thee, for, in all my needs, in all my temptations I shall never cease to call on Thee, ever repeating Thy sacred name, Mary, Mary. O what consolation, what sweetness, what confidence, what emotion fill my soul when I pronounce Thy sacred name, or even only think of Thee. I thank God for having given Thee, for my good, so sweet, so powerful, so lovely a name. But I will not be content with merely pronouncing Thy name: let my love for Thee prompt me ever to hail Thee, MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP.

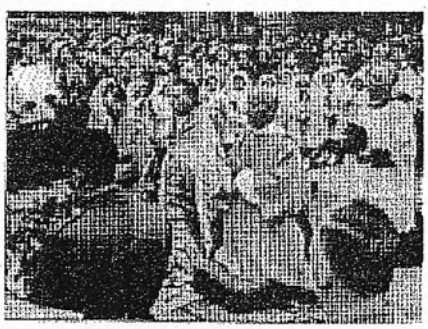
Recite Nine HAIL MARYS.

Popular prayers to Our Lady

Figure 64

Cassie Kane's Lady Altar

Figure 65



Benediction Prayers at Corpus Christi Procession, Tenian Alley

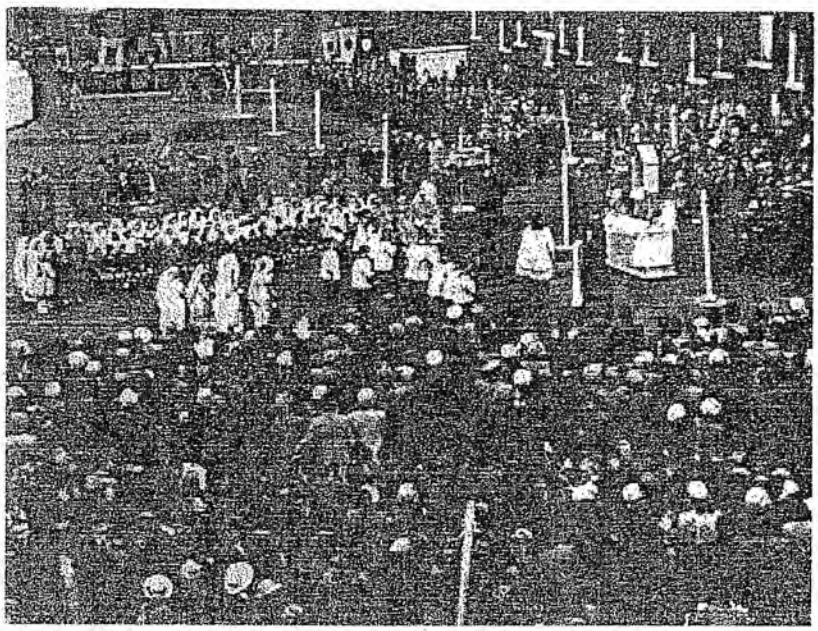
Figure 66

Golden Monstrance carried in Corpus Christi Procession

Figure 67

Benediction prayers along the route of the Corpus Christi Procession

Figure 68



Corpus Christi Procession reaching Fenian Alley. Note the whitened clothes' poles and window sills and the young first communicants.

Figure 69

REGISTER OF RESPONDENTS AND SCHOOL OF SCOTTISH STUDIES TAPE RECORDING REFERENCES	
JOHN BROWN	SA2001:007
PADDY COLLINS	SA1991:12; SA1991:13; SA1997:24; SA1997:25; SA1998:13; SA1998:17; SA1998:18
JOHN CONNAGHAN	SA1990:112; SA1990:113
EMI DONNELLY	SA2001:011; SA2000:012
CASSIE GRAHAM	SA1990:14; SA1990:15; SA1998:09; SA1998:10; SA1998:11; SA1998:14; SA1998:15; SA1998:16
CATHIE HAGAN	SA1991:12; SA1991:13; SA1997:31; SA1997:32; SA1998:09; SA1998:17; SA1998:18
HUGO HAGAN	SA1991:12; SA1991:13; SA1997:31; SA1997:32; SA1998:09; SA1998:17; SA1998:18
SARAH HAGAN	SA2001:004; SA2001:005
MARY HUDSON	SA1992:66
CASSIE KANE	SA1997:22; SA1997:23; SA1997:24; SA1997:25; SA1998:10; SA1998:11
LETTI LYONS	SA2001:008

AGNES MULHOLLAND	**SA2001:002**
HARRY MULHOLLAND	**SA2001:002**
JIM MCBRIDE	**SA2001:007**
JIM MCCORMACK	**SA2001:007**
ELIZABETH MCKENNA	**SA1997:28; SA1997:29; SA1997:30**
NAN MCLEAN	**SA2001:006**
MARGARET O'DONOGHUE	**SA1997:16; SA1997:17; SA1997:18; SA1997:19; SA1997:20; SA1997:21; SA1998:09**
BESSIE O'NEILL	**SA2000:011; SA2001:012**
JIM PETTIGREW	**SA2000:009; SA2001:010**
JIM RENFREW	**SA2000:003**
DAVIE RORRISON	**SA1990:112; SA1990:113**
JESSIE RORRISON	**SA2001:006**
JOHN WADDELL	**SA2000:009; SA2001:010**

JOSIE WATSON	**SA1997:26; SA1997:27; SA1998:12; SA1998:14**
ELLA WILSON	**SA1998:16;**